**14th Student Association Senate Bill Number: 2020-02-02-02**

**Introduced by: SENATOR ARIAS (2020), SENATOR BAZAIL-EIMIL (2023), SENATOR DAI (AT-LARGE), SENATOR DUBKE (2021), SENATOR HAMILTON (2020), SENATOR MARIN-MORA (2021), SENATOR MORENO (2022), SENATOR NUGENT (2020), SENATOR VOLPE (2023), SENATOR WEISS (2022), SENATOR ZIAC (AT-LARGE)**

**Georgetown University Student Association**

In the school year 2019-2020

**An ACT OF REFERENDUM to CREATE the Student Empowerment Fund**

**SECTION 1:** Be it ENACTED that *the following referendum shall be submitted to the undergraduate student body of Georgetown University:*

We, as students, negotiate with the University administration every day, and time and time again we have learned a simple lesson: money talks. It’s time for students to invest in a fund that will give us the agency to complete our own large-scale projects centered on improving student life. The creation of the Student Empowerment Fund (SEF) will provide the student body with the tools it needs to begin the important work of taking our ideas and policies and turning them into meaningful and impactful actions.

Historically, the Georgetown University Student Association (GUSA) initially created a student endowment fund to eventually fully cover the cost of student activities without a fee. GUSA dissolved that initial student endowment fund, worth approximately $2 million, by a vote of the student body in order to support the funding of the Healey Family Student Center (HFSC). Creating a new fund focused on funding similar projects would provide students more agency.

Student voices are loudest when they work in tandem with the university administration to concretely impact student lives. The HFSC was one of the first times when the university worked side-by-side with students to create a dynamic student center at Georgetown. The student body showed its commitment to campus improvement and had a measurable impact through our financial buy-in to the project. In the future, if we seek to replicate the success of the HFSC, we must be willing to make a similar financial investment. As demonstrated by the university and the student body, both win when students are given agency in campus planning. The SEF will grant us such agency.

The fund would begin at the start of fiscal year 2021 by taking $50,000 from the roughly $1,090,000 annual student activities fee budget. With continuously mandated contributions, the fund is estimated to grow to roughly $1,300,000 by fiscal year 2036. The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee decided that, in order to allow the fund to reach a useful size, we would need to write our bylaws such that money cannot be withdrawn from the fund until 15 years have passed. After 15 years, the Finance and Appropriations Committee will work with students to evaluate a variety of proposals submitted by members of the student body. These proposals will then be submitted to the general student body through a referendum, to give Georgetown students the final say on how the money will be spent. Then, armed with these well-thought-out proposals and the support of the student body, the Finance and Appropriations Committee, and student activists can begin working with the university to make these projects a reality.

15 years is a significant number for several reasons. First, once the fund surpasses a million dollars, it will have reached a size that commands significant attention from the university and strengthens students’ seat at the table. Second, 2036 is an important year for Georgetown. The university enacts change on a 20-year planning cycle, during which it cements plans for new buildings and programs. This fund will become available at a crucial time for student negotiations with the administration. We want to have the most impact and a strong voice during that planning period.

The Student Empowerment Fund would be structured as follows:

1. The Student Empowerment Fund (the Fund)
   1. The Fund will be built through an annual allocation of $50,000 from the Student Activities Fee and from any additional revenues from the Student Activities Fee unaccounted for in the Budget and contributions to the fund by Georgetown Alumni.
   2. The Fund is mandated to fund projects which have defined, reasonable, and achievable goals and which invest in the future of the student body, and to supplement the Student Activity Fee as a source of revenue for funding student activities on campus.
   3. Revenues from this fund would be distinct and separate from Student Activities Fee annual allocations but would be included as revenues in the Student Activities Fee Budget.
   4. The Fund will operate under the following institutional rules:
      1. The Student Association cannot withdraw any funds from the Fund until FY 2036 at the earliest.
      2. At any given point, the Finance and Appropriations Committee is only permitted to withdraw 5% of the aggregate assets for the express purpose of serving as an additional source of revenue in the Student Activities Fee Budget.
      3. Any liquidation of more than 5% of aggregate assets will require a ⅔ vote of the Senate and can only occur in accordance with the stated purposes of the Fund.

***I support the creation of the Student Empowerment Fund as described above:***

YES \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2:** The following rules shall govern the above referendum:

1. Voting on the referendum will be open for no less than twenty-four (24) hours.

2. The GUSA Election Commission shall conduct the referendum.

3. All University rules and regulations regarding advertising and campaigning shall apply to this referendum.

**Certification**

We hereby certify that the foregoing legislation was duly considered by the Senate at a meeting at which a quorum was present and that the same was approved by a vote of 20 in favor and 1 opposed, this 2nd day of January, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Speaker Vice Speaker**

I hereby sign this legislation into law.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**President of the Student Association**