

WRITTEN TESTIMONY of ALEXANDER ATKINS

Before the

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT**

March 2, 2016 Hearing on

“Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas on College Campuses”

February 29, 2016

Dear Chairman Roskam, Ranking Member Lewis, and honorable members of the Subcommittee:

I write you today to supplement the testimony I will give at the March 2, 2016 hearing on “Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas on College Campuses.” Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences.

My name is Alexander Atkins, and I am a second year student at Georgetown University Law Center. I am also a member of a group of Law Center students that supports United States Senator Bernie Sanders’s campaign for President.

As you are likely aware, a law student’s extracurricular time is a rare commodity, so our group’s goals are fairly modest. We want to share our enthusiasm for Sanders’s campaign and encourage our peers to participate in the election. But rather than achieving these unassuming goals, our group has spent nearly six months struggling just to engage in basic civic expression.

Our group was formed in September 2015, at the start of the school year. Our initial goal was simply to establish our presence on campus, so we decided to reserve a table outside of the main cafeteria, where other student groups commonly reserve space to engage in outreach. As we were planning this first activity, I received a campus-wide email entitled, “University Guidance on Political Campaign Activity and Lobbying.”¹ The email recognized the increased political engagement surrounding the 2016 election, and explained that “the University, as a tax-exempt organization, . . . is subject to limitations on the use of its resources for partisan political campaign activities.”² Rather than specifying what these limitations were, the email advised students who were interested in such activities to consult with the University’s Office of Federal Relations.³ I emailed the office that day,⁴ but I never received a response.

The following week, I submitted a Tabling Request Form to the Office of Student Life.⁵ The Office denied the request because our group was “requesting to table . . . in support of a specific candidate,” and the Office directed me to the same campus-wide email about political campaign activity.⁶

Our group was eager to begin the outreach efforts that we had planned nearly a month earlier. Many of us chose Georgetown Law, in part, for its presence in the Nation’s

¹ See Attachment #1.

² See *id.*

³ See *id.*

⁴ See Attachment #2.

⁵ See Attachment #3.

⁶ See Attachment #4.

capital and the presumption of heightened opportunities to engage in the political process. With no apparent channel for our intended expression, on two occasions in late September, we resorted to tabling in unreservable areas of the cafeteria. Despite the less than ideal location, many students stopped to speak with us. They were excited to connect with fellow Sanders supporters, and they appreciated receiving information on voting in their home states.

October 13th was the first Democratic debate—an ideal opportunity to amplify our message and achieve greater student engagement. It was a beautiful day, so we decided to table outside the entrance to the campus’s main academic building. While representing our chosen candidate, we enjoyed friendly interactions with our fellow students and encouraged them to attend an off-campus debate-watching event. But within an hour, a representative of the Office of Student Life came outside and told us that we were violating the School’s policy and that we were required to stop. We were disappointed, but we were mostly frustrated that the representative was unable to clarify precisely what the policy was or how we could permissibly engage in this valuable expression.

In early November, I emailed the Office of Student Life seeking additional clarity.⁷ The Office responded promptly⁸ and directed me to Georgetown Law’s “Student Organization Policy on Partisan Political Activities.”⁹ The Policy begins optimistically, explaining that “[s]tudents . . . are encouraged to participate in the political process and are free to express their individual and collective political views.”¹⁰ However, the Policy sharply qualifies that statement by mandating that students “may not use University-supported resources, including space on campus, . . . for partisan political campaign activity.”¹¹

The Policy’s contradictory approach can only be explained by its reference to the Internal Revenue Code: “As a non-profit institution of higher education whose activities are regulated in part by Section 501(c)(3)[,]” Georgetown Law “must generally avoid engaging in partisan political campaign activity and must restrict the use of University resources in support of such activity.”¹²

Our group was shocked by the Policy’s implications for students’ political expression, and we questioned the legitimacy of its rationale. Notably, when we attempted to partner with recognized student groups, they expressed their own uncertain apprehensions about violating the Policy. Meanwhile, other students I spoke with reacted with nearly unanimous confusion.

“Why would the school not want you to do that?” they asked. “Isn’t that what college campuses are for?”

⁷ See Attachment #5.

⁸ See Attachment #6.

⁹ See Attachment #7.

¹⁰ See *id.*

¹¹ See *id.*

¹² See *id.*

When I explained that Georgetown's Policy seemed to be rooted in concerns about losing its tax exemption, many students seemed to share my own growing skepticism. Could it really be true that the IRS would penalize Georgetown for allowing its students to engage in free expression? The budding lawyer in me wanted an answer.

In a final email to the Office of Student Life, I inquired as to who had drafted the Policy and whether the Policy's primary rationale was indeed to avoid violation of 501(c)(3).¹³ I was advised that concerns about jeopardizing the University's tax status were "at least part of the rationale," but that, because the Policy had been developed by the Office of Federal Relations, the Office of Student Life "[couldn't] speculate as to what other rationales support[ed] the policy."¹⁴

My efforts to determine the actual requirements of 501(c)(3) led me to contact the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). An informative conversation with one of FIRE's attorneys confirmed what I had already suspected—that Georgetown's Policy was far stricter than necessary. FIRE offered to write a letter to Georgetown on our group's behalf. Although our group was relieved to finally have an ally, we were determined to make one final effort to resolve the conflict ourselves. In early December, members of our group wrote directly to the Dean of the Law Center and the Dean of Students.¹⁵ We explained our predicament, sought clarity on the school's policies, and hoped that we might reach an arrangement that could accommodate both the University's interests and our own.¹⁶ After waiting more than a month without receiving a response, our group decided to accept FIRE's offer.

FIRE's letter—and the media attention it created—has motivated Georgetown University Law Center to acknowledge the unmet needs of its students. The Law Center is now revising its policies to permit certain partisan activities. This is an undeniably positive step, and I am thankful to be included in the process. However, these changes cannot undo the nearly six months we lost—six months when all we wanted was to engage in basic civic expression long considered emblematic of America's educational campuses. Georgetown Law is just one example of a much broader problem. Colleges and universities across the country need to be reminded of their obligation, not just to permit, but to protect the vital free exchange of ideas.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences.

Alexander Atkins
alexander.atkins@mac.com

¹³ See Attachment #8.

¹⁴ See Attachment #9.

¹⁵ See Attachment #10.

¹⁶ See *id.*

ATTACHMENT #1

From: Campus Broadcast [redacted]
Subject: University Guidance on Political Campaign Activity and Lobbying
Date: September 11, 2015 at 4:21 PM
To: Campus Broadcast [redacted]



As the academic year gets underway, we wanted to remind you of the rules that apply to the University's engagement in political campaign activity and lobbying. The University encourages its students, faculty and staff to engage in the political process and in issue or cause advocacy in their personal capacities, and certain limited political activities and lobbying are permissible on campus. It is important for members of our community to understand, however, that there are restrictions and requirements relating to political activity and lobbying by the University or utilizing University resources. **If you are considering engaging in political campaign activity or lobbying activities in your University capacity, or in ways that involve University resources or could appear to be on behalf of the University, you should pay careful attention to the following information and contact the Office of Federal Relations for guidance.**

Political Campaign Activity

The 2016 political campaign is already dominating the news, and the presidential and other elections are sure to draw more and more attention. While individuals, of course, may support candidates of their choice, the University, as a tax-exempt organization, is prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for political office and is subject to limitations on the use of its resources for partisan political campaign activities. Members of the University community, including student groups, who wish to engage in political campaign activities in their University capacity or in ways that use University resources should consult with the Office of Federal Relations in advance for guidance. Many political activities can be conducted on campus, but it is important that activities be planned and structured in ways that meet requirements. More detailed information is available at: <http://federalrelations.georgetown.edu/news/lobbying> .

Lobbying

Although we typically think of lobbying as an attempt to influence specific legislation, it encompasses a broad range of communications with various federal officials and also activity that helps to prepare others to make such communications. Georgetown is represented by a registered federal lobbyist (Scott Fleming), and as a result must observe lobbying rules and reporting requirements. There is a cap on the amount of lobbying the University can engage in and we must file quarterly lobbying reports that report on all lobbying activity that has been undertaken on behalf of the University, include a calculation of the dollar value of University resources devoted to lobbying activities, and list the topics on which lobbying has occurred. Keeping track of all lobbying activity is an important, legally-required, responsibility of the Office of Federal Relations. Before you engage in any lobbying activity that involves members of the University community or utilizes University resources (or if you have questions about whether a planned activity may constitute lobbying), you should contact the Office of Federal Relations.

Finally, it is also important to note that Congressional gift rules generally prohibit members of the University community from offering or providing anything of value to a Member of Congress or a Congressional staff person. Federal agencies also have their own gift rules. There are a series of exceptions to these rules, including for widely attended events, certain educational events, and a carefully defined personal friendship exception. but it is best to check with the Office of Federal

Relations to determine how these rules apply to a particular circumstance.

Thank you for your attention to this information. Please contact us if you have questions either at federalrelations@georgetown.edu or by phone to [202-687-3455](tel:202-687-3455).

With best regards

Christopher Murphy
Vice President
for Government Relations
and Community Affairs

Scott S. Fleming
Associate Vice President
for Federal Relations

James E. Ward
Associate Vice President
for Compliance and Ethics

ATTACHMENT #2

From: Alexander Atkins [REDACTED]
Subject: Law Student Political Activity
Date: September 11, 2015 at 4:58 PM
To: federalrelations@georgetown.edu



Greetings,

I am part of an unofficial law student group in support of Bernie Sanders' run for President. I want to make sure that we are able to engage in meaningful extracurricular activities while complying with the University's policies. Please let me know who/when I can call to discuss these issues.

Thank you,

Alex Atkins

Alexander Atkins

[REDACTED]
Juris Doctor Candidate
Georgetown University Law Center

Staff Member
Georgetown Law Journal

Resident Fellow
Gewirz Student Center

ATTACHMENT #3

From: Alexander Atkins [REDACTED]
 Subject: Tabling Request
 Date: September 14, 2015 at 8:36 AM
 To: Office of Student Life studentlife@law.georgetown.edu



Tabling request attached.

Thank you!

| | | Date Request Submitted: 09/14/2015 | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Name: Alexander Atkins | | GULC Email: [REDACTED] | |
| Dept/Org: GULC Students for Bernie Sanders | | Telephone Number: (914) 318-2256 | |
| Purpose of Request: Raising awareness and providing voter registration | | | |
| Will food or beverages be served? NO | | Will money be exchanged? NO | |
| <i>Food and Beverage Advisory: Requestor is responsible for insuring that the area is in good condition after occupancy. Please contact Facilities Management at (202) 662-9330 if extra trash cans or additional services are needed.</i> | | | |
| <i>For Audio Visual Assistance, please contact AV directly at (202) 662-9026.</i> | | | |
| <i>All requests should be considered tentative until confirmation is received. The following policies and regulations govern table usage and rental at Georgetown University Law Center. The guidelines require users to abide by all Law Center regulations. In addition, table usage must be consistent with the academic mission and standards of Georgetown University Law Center:</i> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All requesters must complete a Table Request Form. • A maximum of 2 tables may be reserved at any given time by one organization/group. • All users may tack signs on the bulletin board on the wall of the chapel area behind their table. Signs must be removed when the usage period has ended. No signs are to be placed on the doors of the chapel. • Entrances to the chapel may not be obstructed. • Only internal groups may use tables on Wednesdays. • Tables are for internal use, Law Center related sales, and sales of law related materials. • Tables are not available for individual use. | | | |
| I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL THE ABOVE REGULATIONS. | | | |
| SIGNATURE: Alexander Franklin Atkins | | | |
| Date(s) of Use | Time (From - To) A.M. or P.M. | Number of Tables Requested (Max. 2) | Table(s) Assigned <i>(to be completed by Student Life staff)</i> |
| Tues, 9/15 | 12p-3p & 5p-7p | 1 | |
| Thurs, 9/17 | 12p-3p & 5p-7p | 1 | |
| | | | |
| You may submit your request electronically to studentlife@law.georgetown.edu, in person, or by fax to (202) 662-9261. | | | |
| Assigned by: | | Date Completed: | Tracking #: |
| GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER AHJ | | | REVISED 10/07- |

ATTACHMENT #4

From: Office of Student Life studentlife@law.georgetown.edu
Subject: FW: University Guidance on Political Campaign Activity and Lobbying
Date: September 15, 2015 at 9:24 AM
To: Alexander Atkins(fwd) [REDACTED]



Hi Alex,

Unfortunately, we cannot approve your request to table since you are requesting to table on behalf/in support of a specific candidate. Please see the University's policies below.

Best,

OSL

The Office of Student Life | GEORGETOWN LAW
studentlife@law.georgetown.edu | McDonough 170 & 171
Office: 202.662.9292 | Fax: 202.662.9261
[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [OrgSync](#)

From: Office of Federal Relations [<mailto:announcements@georgetown.edu>]
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2015 3:45 PM
To: bls35@georgetown.edu
Subject: University Guidance on Political Campaign Activity and Lobbying

As the academic year gets underway, we wanted to remind you of the rules that apply to the University's engagement in political campaign activity and lobbying. The University encourages its students, faculty and staff to engage in the political process and in issue or cause advocacy in their personal capacities, and certain limited political activities and lobbying are permissible on campus. It is important for members of our community to understand, however, that there are restrictions and requirements relating to political activity and lobbying by the University or utilizing University resources. **If you are considering engaging in political campaign activity or lobbying activities in your University capacity, or in ways that involve University resources or could appear to be on behalf of the University, you should pay careful attention to the following information and contact the Office of Federal Relations for guidance.**

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The 2016 political campaign is already dominating the news, and the presidential and other elections are sure to draw more and more attention. While individuals, of course, may support candidates of their choice, the University, as a tax-exempt organization, is prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for political office and is subject to limitations on the use of its resources for partisan political campaign activities. Members of the University community, including student groups, who wish to engage in political campaign activities in their University capacity or in ways that use University resources should consult with the Office of Federal Relations in advance for guidance. Many political activities can be conducted on campus, but it is important that activities be planned and structured in ways that meet requirements. More detailed information is available at: <http://federalrelations.georgetown.edu/news/lobbying>

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Although we typically think of lobbying as an attempt to influence specific legislation, it encompasses a broad range of communications with various federal officials and also activity that helps to prepare others to make such communications. Georgetown is represented by a registered federal lobbyist (Scott Fleming), and as a result must observe lobbying rules and reporting requirements. There is a cap on the amount of lobbying the University can engage in and we must file quarterly lobbying reports that report on all lobbying activity that has been undertaken on behalf of the University, include a calculation of the dollar value of University resources devoted to lobbying activities, and list the topics on which lobbying has occurred. Keeping track of all lobbying activity is an important, legally-required, responsibility of the Office of Federal Relations. Before you engage in any lobbying activity that involves members of the University community or utilizes University resources (or if you have questions about whether a planned activity may constitute lobbying), you should contact the Office of Federal Relations.

Finally, it is also important to note that Congressional gift rules generally prohibit members of the University community from offering or providing anything of value to a Member of Congress or a Congressional staff person. Federal agencies also have their own gift rules. There are a series of exceptions to these rules, including for widely attended events, certain educational events, and a carefully defined personal friendship exception, but it is best to check with the Office of Federal Relations to determine how these rules apply to a particular circumstance.

Thank you for your attention to this information. Please contact us if you have questions either at federalrelations@georgetown.edu or by phone to 202-687-3455.

With best regards

Christopher Murphy
Vice President
for Government Relations
and Community Affairs

Scott S. Fleming
Associate Vice President
for Federal Relations

James E. Ward
Associate Vice President
for Compliance and Ethics

ATTACHMENT #5

From: Alexander Atkins [REDACTED]
Subject: Student Political Activity
Date: November 4, 2015 at 10:06 AM
To:



Greetings,

I write to you seeking clarity on the Law Center's policies regarding political activity by individual students and groups. I am a member of a group of students who are dedicating a portion of our extra-curricular time to supporting Senator Bernie Sanders' campaign for President. We are eager to contribute to our academic and professional community while also complying with the University's policies.

I have read the campus-wide email providing guidance on the University's policies regarding political campaign activity, and have also read the [Rules Governing Political Activities on College and University Campuses](#) online. However, it remains unclear to me precisely what activity is and is not permitted when it comes to students, as it seems that the rules and guidance pertain almost entirely to the institution itself and its faculty and staff. I emailed the Office of Federal Relations in mid-September seeking additional clarity, but I never received a response.

Our group's request for a tabling reservation was denied by the Office of Student Life, and we were directed to the campus-wide email mentioned above. We were subsequently asked by OSL to vacate an un-reservable outdoor table where two members of our group were seated while providing information about Sanders' campaign and primary voting procedures with campaign materials on display.

Members of our group look forward to engaging in respectful, valued expression on the Law Center campus. Any guidance you can provide would be sincerely appreciated.

Thank you,

Alex

Alexander Atkins

(914) 318-2256 [REDACTED]

Juris Doctor Candidate
Georgetown University Law Center

Staff Member
Georgetown Law Journal

Resident Fellow
Gewirz Student Center

ATTACHMENT #6

From: Kenrick F. Roberts [mailto:kfr25@law.georgetown.edu]
Subject: RE: Student Political Activity
Date: November 5, 2015 at 10:46 AM
To: Alexander Atkins(fwd) [mailto:a37@georgetown.edu]
Cc: Beverly L. Sapp [mailto:bs35@law.georgetown.edu], Maura K Grant Hayes [mailto:mkh61@law.georgetown.edu], Scott Fleming [mailto:sf@georgetown.edu]



Hello Alex,

I apologize if my original statements to you regarding this were unclear, I will offer further explanation in my four points below.

First, your tabling request was denied because you are not a registered student organization or department at the Law Center; furthermore, you are not sponsored by a student organization or department and therefore cannot reserve space for your activities.

Second, as I mentioned when we spoke about this the first time, in regards to your supporting activity of Senator Sanders, as a non-profit institution of higher education whose activities are regulated in part by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, Georgetown University (which includes the Law Center) must avoid engaging in partisan political campaign activity and must restrict the use of University resources in support of such activity.

Third, even if a group is recognized on campus, student organizations may not use University resources to engage in partisan political campaign activities and must obtain advance approval from the Office of Student Life (and the Office of Federal Relations) for any such activities that occur on University premises (which includes Law Center premises as well).

Fourth, as it relates specifically to candidates for office, campaigning and solicitation, including transmission of campaign materials over the internet, leaflet distribution, and display of posters, is not allowed anywhere on Law Center property or using University servers or equipment.

You can download and review the policy in its entirety here: <https://orgsync.com/18903/files/587087/show>.

If you have further questions, or if I can clarify even further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Kenrick F. Roberts, M.S. | Coordinator of Student Organizations
GEORGETOWN LAW | [mailto:kfr25@law.georgetown.edu]
Office: 202.662.9272 | Fax: 202.662.9261
[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

ATTACHMENT #7

GEORGETOWN LAW STUDENT ORGANIZATION POLICY ON PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Georgetown University Law Center encourages and supports the free exchange of ideas and political viewpoints. As a non-profit institution of higher education whose activities are regulated in part by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, however, Georgetown University and the Law Center must generally avoid engaging in partisan political campaign activity and must restrict the use of University resources in support of such activity.

The following rules govern the use of Law Center facilities and resources for partisan political activity.

Students, Staff and Faculty

Students, staff and faculty are encouraged to participate in the political process and are free to express their individual and collective political views. When doing so, individuals should make clear that the views they express are their own, and should not suggest or imply that they are speaking for or in the name of Georgetown University or Georgetown University Law Center. Individuals may not use the Georgetown name, insignia or seal on material that is used or intended for partisan political campaign purposes.

If University affiliated student organizations engage in activities that support or oppose particular candidates for election to public office, they should do so in a way that does not state or imply endorsement of their views by the University. Student organizations generally may not use University resources to engage in partisan political campaign activities (with the limited exceptions set forth in the *Use of Georgetown University Law Center Facilities and Resources* section below) and must obtain advance approval from the Office of student Life (and the Office of Federal Relations) for any such activities that occur on University premises.

Student organizations that wish to engage in lobbying in connection with or support of a particular cause may do so in some instances, but only with advance consultation with and approval from the Office of Federal Relations. Student organizations interested in such cause-related activities may contact the Office of Federal Relations at 202-687-3455 or by e-mail to ssf2@georgetown.edu. Of course, individual students are always free to advocate on areas of personal interest before Congress or any other governmental entity without involving the University provided that University resources are not utilized in that regard.

Candidate Speakers and Campaigning

Candidates for public office may appear on campus for a speech or an educational or informational talk to the Law Center community, but such appearances must be sponsored by a recognized Law Center organization and approved by the University. When the University allows one candidate to appear on campus, it generally must offer other candidates in the same election a substantially similar opportunity to appear. Student organizations should make clear to speakers who are candidates for political office that they may not engage in activities such as fundraising,

solicitation, or rallies while on campus. Student organizations must secure approval for such events from the Office of Student Life at least two weeks in advance.

Candidate campaigning and solicitation, including transmission of campaign materials over the internet, leaflet distribution, and display of posters, is not allowed anywhere on Law Center property or using University servers or equipment.

Use of Georgetown University Law Center Facilities and Resources

Law Center students, organizations and departments generally may use Law Center facilities and resources for activities relating to their missions, including politically oriented activities. Politically oriented student organizations may book a table in the Chapel Area on the first floor of McDonough Hall, but must post a sign that clearly indicates that use of the table does not imply endorsement of any particular political viewpoint from the Georgetown University Law Center. All uses of Law Center properties are subject to university policies regarding time, place, and manner.

Students, student organizations and departments may use campus communications to announce political forums and discussions that are sponsored by officially constituted campus groups, but may not use University-supported resources, including space on campus, Georgetown's phone system, computer networks or servers, or postal service, for partisan political campaign activity. Using Law Center resources or the Georgetown name to fund or support a political campaign or political action group or committee is strictly prohibited, as is the use of the University's tax-exempt number for purchase of anything associated with partisan political campaign activity. Law Center facilities and services may not be used by or on behalf of an outside organization or outside individual whose purpose is to further the cause of a particular political party or candidate.

Nonpartisan Political Activities

The University encourages nonpartisan political activities, such as properly organized voter registration activities, voter education programs and candidate debates, that do not evidence a preference for or opposition to a political party or to candidates who have taken a particular position and which provide an equal forum for opposing parties and candidates. In order to ensure that all legal and university requirements are followed, advance approval for these events must be obtained from (and all materials must be reviewed by) the Office of Student Life.

ATTACHMENT #8

From: Alexander Atkins [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Student Political Activity
Date: November 9, 2015 at 2:48 PM
To: [REDACTED]



Hey Kenrick,

Thank you for the additional explanation, for directing me to the Policy on Partisan Political Activities, and for your offer to provide further information and clarity. I hope you won't mind my asking a couple follow-up questions.

(1) Who formulated and drafted the Policy on Partisan Political Activities?

(2) Is the primary rationale behind the Policy's restrictions to ensure that GULC is not perceived as engaging in partisan political activity, which would be violative of 501(c)(3)?

Thank you very much,

Alex

Alexander Atkins

[REDACTED]
Juris Doctor Candidate
Georgetown University Law Center

Staff Member
Georgetown Law Journal

Resident Fellow
Gewirz Student Center

ATTACHMENT #9

From: Kenrick F. Roberts [mailto:kr25@law.georgetown.edu]
Subject: RE: Student Political Activity
Date: November 9, 2015 at 3:17 PM
To: Alexander Atkins(fwd) [mailto:atkins@georgetown.edu]



Hi Alex,

I am not sure as to the relevance of who drafted/formulated the Policy on Partisan Political Activity; nonetheless, it was developed by the University's Office of Federal Relations. Since the University is a tax-exempt organization, I am confident that your second statement is at least part of the rationale behind the policy since engaging in such activity could jeopardize the University's tax status. However, since I am not the one who wrote the policy, I cannot speculate as to what other rationales support the policy. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Best,

Kenrick F. Roberts, M.S. | Coordinator of Student Organizations
GEORGETOWN LAW | kr25@law.georgetown.edu
Office: 202.662.9272 | Fax: 202.662.9261
[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

ATTACHMENT #10

From: **Alexander Atkins** [REDACTED]
Subject: Student political activity
Date: December 4, 2015 at 8:29 PM
To: [REDACTED] Mitchell Bailin [REDACTED]



Dean Treanor and Dean Bailin,

We write to you seeking clarity on the Law Center's policies regarding political activity by individual students and groups.

We are members of a growing group of students who are dedicating a portion of our extra-curricular time to supporting Senator Bernie Sanders's campaign for President. We consider this activity to be meaningful, productive, and a natural extension of our development as lawyers and citizens. We are eager to respectfully share our enthusiasm with our academic and professional community, but our efforts to do so have been hindered by policies which we seek to more thoroughly understand.

The Office of Student Life has been forthcoming in answering questions and directing us to the "Policy on Partisan Political Activities." We were somewhat startled to discover that the policy seems to entirely prohibit students from using space on campus for political campaign activity. From what we can tell, the rationale behind this restriction is tied to 501(c)(3)'s prohibition on tax-exempt nonprofits engaging in partisan politics. Assuming this is the case, we are interested in exploring reasonable ways that we as students can permissibly engage in conduct which the institution itself is proscribed from.

Our group sincerely appreciates your attention to this matter. We look forward to gaining further insight into Georgetown's perspective on this issue, and finding ways for our group to engage in respectful, valued expression while also comporting with the University's policies.

Thank you,

Alex Atkins
Dominic Gallucci
Geoff Gilbert
Matt Blair
Parker Sheffy

Alexander Atkins

[REDACTED]
Juris Doctor Candidate
Georgetown University Law Center

Staff Member
Georgetown Law Journal

Resident Fellow
Gewirz Student Center