**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**SR-F16-08 (Fake number)**

*A resolution supporting Congressional Bill H.R. 6122, The Access to Instructional Materials for Higher Education Act (AIM-HEA), and its implementation at GWU.*

**SHORT TITLE: ​** Affirming Accessibility Act

**COMMITTEE: ​**Student Life Committee

**SPONSOR: ​** Senator Peak Sen Chua (MISPH-U, Student Life Committee)

**COSPONSORS: ​** Cosponsors to be added

**PURPOSE:** A Resolution to express the Student Association’s support for the AIM-HEA in order to bolster the George Washington University’s (GWU) ongoing commitment to increasing accessibility of educational materials for students in higher education. Also a Resolution to affirm the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, scholarship, and community at the George Washington University.

**AFFIRMING:** Our collective responsibility in ensuring that The George Washington University meets the needs of our many diverse, unique, and essential communities.

**AWARE OF:** The ever-present importance of technology in improving the functions of our daily lives, from eBooks to Global Positioning Systems.

**FURTHER AWARE OF:** The inadequate level of accessibility to websites, such as GWU Admissions, BanWeb, BlackBoard, and all other websites hosted by The George Washington University for students who are visually and/or hearing impaired.

**ALARMED BY:** Effects this inaccessibility has had on visual and hearing impaired students, who rely on academic material posted by course instructors to be accessible in order for material to be disseminated via audiovisual means.

**FURTHER ALARMED BY:** The negative academic effects of being unable to access said essential course materials, including receiving academic materials late, if at all, missing out on valuable information and courses reliant on specialized software, and lower grades, with these effects not being limited to the brief list above nor to a single semester of study.

**EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION:** That GWU’s student services, namely Disability Support Services (DSS), Division of Academic Technologies, and the Division of Information Technology strives to accommodate visually and/or hearing impaired students, specifically through assistive technology labs at the Gelman Library, or the commitment from GW Libraries to provide content that is W3C AAA compliant.

**FURTHER EXPRESSING ITS APPRECIATION:** Towards GWU’s student services for being supportive of expanding accessibility in all forms, including the DSS’ commitment to providing new online information for students affected by temporary disabilities, an issue outside the DSS’ capacity to provide its high-quality services, and the DSS’ commitment to meeting student leaders with regards to improving accessibility as a whole.

**CONFIDENT:** That ongoing meetings with DSS and other student support services will be conducive to further implementing the ideals in the AIM-HEA, and that support from the Student Association and the GWU community will further bolster these efforts.

**WHEREAS:** Congressional bill H.R. 6122 and its mission to “To authorize the creation of a commission to develop voluntary accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials and related technologies used in postsecondary education, and for other purposes” is made in good faith and awaiting discussion and approval from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce as of 31 October, 2016.

**EMPHASIZING:** That supporting a federal bill would be part of GWU and its student body’s commitment to making history and continue the passionate and active participation in politics at this institution, located in the geopolitical capital of the world.

**KEEPING IN MIND:** Thatthe National Federation of the Blind has written, spoken, and advocated extensively in support of the said legislation in order to “reduce the employment gap for people with disabilities and to compete on the grounds of merit, not access.”

**FURTHER EMPHASIZING:** ThatAIM-HEA would, according to The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) entails the creation of a commission on educational materials accessibility which will compile a list of voluntary guidelines and universities to utilize – these guidelines will save institutions of higher learning from litigation and mitigate the disparities in accessibility and ability to thrive in classrooms across this country.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Student Association continues to recognize all students, including the visually and hearing impaired as qualified and equal to their peers as part of the cohesive community that the George Washington University is and strives to be.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** Voting members of the Student Association and by extension, the GWU community at large support the passage of Congressional Bill H.R. 6122, *The Access to Instructional Materials for Higher Education Act.*

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That apart from supporting AIM-HEA’s passing at the federal level, the Student Association will continue to advocate and speak out in support of increasing access to instructional materials and other goals listed in AIM-HEA.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Student Association, in the spirit of the goals of AIM-HEA will continue to work with university administrators to ensure equal access to instructional materials and to increase accessibility to GWU hosted websites.

STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE VOTE: \_\_\_YEA \_\_\_NAY \_\_\_ABSTAIN

FINANCE COMMITTEE VOTE: \_\_\_YEA \_\_\_NAY \_\_\_ABSTAIN

SENATE VOTE: \_\_\_YEA \_\_\_NAY \_\_\_ABSTAIN

     PASSED      PASSED AS AMENDED  
  
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Thomas Falcigno, Executive Vice President Date

ATTEST:  
  
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Ben Yoxall, Senate Secretary            Date

PRESIDENTIAL SUBMISSION

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Erika Feinman, President Date

APPROVE/VETO