



IWV Supports The Collegiate Freedom of Association Act

June 28, 2019

Independent Women's Voice, which fights to enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities, is proud to support The Collegiate Freedom of Association Act (H.R. 3128), introduced by Representative Ruben Gallego (D) and cosponsored by a bipartisan group of members in the House of Representatives, including eight Democrats and six Republicans.

H.R. 3128 would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to uphold freedom of association protections for students on college campuses. Recently, Harvard University changed its policy to penalize students who join single-sex organizations. The policy, implemented with the Freshmen class of 2017, bars any undergraduate student who joins an "unrecognized" single-sex social organization, like a sorority or a fraternity, for example, from holding a campus leadership position (such as the captain of a sports team) or from receiving College endorsement for fellowships or scholarships (such as the Rhodes Scholarship).

Harvard administrators argue this policy change was necessary to combat the "**deeply misogynistic**" behavior of off-campus, all-male social groups and protect female students from sexual assault. Not only is this misguided policy based on pernicious gender stereotypes, but it also ignores Harvard's own internal survey, which found that **87%** of sexual assaults took place in dorms, not single-sex clubs.

In practice, Harvard's policy hurts women. Since these new rules were put into place, **almost all of Harvard's sororities have disbanded** while most male-only groups remain open. The dissolution of single-sex organizations can have many drawbacks for young women. All-female organizations provide their members with leadership, philanthropic, and networking opportunities. In fact, many of today's women **business leaders** and **elected officials** belonged to sororities.

Harvard's decision to penalize students who join single-sex organizations violates basic principles of free association and results in disproportionate harm to female students. The Collegiate Freedom of Association Act would protect women at Harvard by eliminating these unfair sanctions and would rightly defend all students' right to associate freely. IWV thanks Representative Gallego for his leadership on this important issue and urges all Members of Congress to work toward the swift passage of H.R. 3128.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hadley Heath Manning".

Hadley Heath Manning

Director of Policy

Independent Women's Voice