

Committee proposes amendments to USG constitution to senate

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The Undergraduate Student Government's Constitutional Review Committee proposed two amendments to the USG constitution, one of which was partially approved by the senate during the March 6 meeting.

After revisions, USG unanimously passed an amendment that allows senators up to four meeting absences per semester. Once a senator reaches the fourth absence, they become eligible for impeachment.

"As soon as you hit that fourth absence, it doesn't mean that the Undergraduate Student Government member is going to be impeached," Andrew Windsor, co-chair of the Constitutional Review Committee, said in an interview. "It just means that in case that person is abusing their title, abusing their privileges and taking money and not showing up to do their job, you can impeach that person."

Originally, the Constitutional Review Committee, led by co-chairs Liam Giordano and Windsor, proposed two amendments to the USG constitution.

The first amendment, which was struck down through a soft vote by the senate, was meant to change how USG spends its budget. According to the committee's report, USG is constitutionally required to approve all spending, and the senate does so by approving its annual budget.

The amendment would have required the senate to vote on any spending above \$1,000 in addition to voting in the budget. As stated in the report, the reasons for this amendment were concerns of wasteful spending, transparency and accountability in paperwork.

However, some senate members said this would be difficult to apply during the Summer and Winter sessions when senators may either work or visit their hometowns, which would make them unable to attend the meetings and thus vote on spending.

Since USG does not allow for proxy votes, absent senators would also be unable to virtually attend the meeting.

Another concern, brought up by Representative Senator Emma Jorgensen, is that this voting procedure would not allow for emergency spending.

In response to Jorgensen, Windsor proposed that people can use their own money for emergency spending. However, some senators argued that spending one's own money and then getting reimbursed for it would create a loophole in the amendment.

In a soft vote, the senate cast five votes for the amendment and 11 against.

When asked about his opinion on the budget amendment being rejected, Giordano said that the committee was "a bit disappointed."

"[W]e went in with the best intentions, thinking the amendment would benefit the student body. But ultimately, genuine concerns were raised regarding an extra layer of bureaucratic red tape and regarding the possible need for emergency spending in the future," Giordano said.

The second amendment, which was partially passed by the senate, proposes an absence limit for senators.

According to the report, the absence amendment was brought to the senate table because of "concerns over excessive absences, lack of accountability and lack of con-



The Constitutional Review Committee presented its proposed amendments to the USG senate during the March 6 meeting.

stitutional duty for representative senators."

The original amendment consisted of two parts. First, it established the limit of four absences for any USG member with voting power. Second, it stated that attending less than half of a meeting would count as an absence.

During the meeting, the senate agreed to remove the second part of the amendment as it might pose an issue for senators who may be late to a short meeting, or senators who have a 7:20 p.m. class and choose to leave a long meeting before it ends.

As such, the final amendment established: "Any Four (4) absences per semester from official meetings in which a U.S.G. member is eligible to cast a vote" as grounds for impeachment.

"The senate agreed [the amend-

ment] would be useful to have within the Constitution [and] it can genuinely encourage fair representation of Baruch students in the future," Giordano said in response to the amendment being passed.

"The revision isn't too shocking, being that the intention remains within the amendment, as it still provides a safety-net against negligent representation."

According to the USG constitution, in order for an amendment to be ratified, the senate must obtain signatures of at least 10 percent of students, it must follow rules established by the Bernard M. Baruch College Governance Charter regarding referendums and the amendment must be submitted before deadline as a referendum item to the Office of Student Affairs.

Once this is done, the referen-

dum for the amendment will be put on the election ballot.

The amendment will only be adapted if 10 percent of students vote in the referendum, of which a majority must support the amendment. If this condition is not met, the amendment can be approved by Baruch President Mitchel Wallerstein.

Additional reporting by Victoria Merlino

Editor's Notes:

Liam Giordano is currently a Staff Writer for The Ticker's News section.

Andrew Windsor previously served as the USG Correspondent for The Ticker.