

*On behalf of a score of colleagues, I move:
Harvard College shall not discipline,
penalize, or otherwise sanction
students for joining, or affiliating
with, any lawful organization, political
party, or social, political, or other affinity gro
up.*

Let me quickly review how we got here, because we've talked long enough and it's time for a vote. Eighteen months ago, during exam period in the spring of 2016, the College announced sanctions against students belonging to certain off-campus organizations. This came as a surprise to everyone, because it had not been voted or even discussed in this Faculty or in any committee of our elected representatives. I made a motion that would have prevented those sanctions from taking effect. It was debated twice, and then the President adjourned last December's meeting without a vote. A committee was announced to

review the policy, and so I respectfully withdrew that motion. Instead the Clark-Khurana committee first proposed much harsher sanctions, and then issued a report with no single recommendation. Through all this time, the rationales for punishing every member of an expanding list of clubs kept shifting, from sexual assault to gender discrimination to exclusivity. Yet the question women students are asking today was never addressed: why are members of women's groups to be punished at all?

The report stated that the President would choose among the options, even though matters of discipline of students are for this body to decide, not the president or any dean. The president has declined to acknowledge that this matter is within Faculty jurisdiction. I introduced a new version of the motion, and this is its second reading. In the meantime, one puzzling alternative motion was made, and

then withdrawn without a vote. Another murky motion is to be offered later today. That motion would, very unwisely, have this Faculty permanently cede its authority to the administration, authority not just over social clubs but in other areas as well.

It has been said that we need to be idealistic, to create the best possible environment for our students. But idealism is not the same as utopianism. The history of utopian undertakings is not encouraging. Utopias have an official version of social harmony and tend to punish nonconformists. Students come to Harvard not for a social utopia, but for a liberal education in all its tensions and complexity, an education that teaches them how to use the freedom they enjoy, with advice but without coercion.

My motion ensures that students are, like us, entitled to private decisions about what

organizations they join. I regret that this matter has taken up so much Faculty time. Let's debate the motion briefly again and vote, so we can finally know where the Faculty stands.

Madam President, I ask to be recognized again at the appropriate time to request a paper ballot.