

AN OPEN LETTER FROM TEXAS A&M STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT, JOHN L. CLAYBROOK

Howdy,

After much research and deliberation, I have confidently decided to veto S.B. 65-70, The Religious Funding Exemption bill. Even without the wording that specified particular groups that would be affected in the final version of this bill, the sentiment towards the bill has not changed and has caused great harm to our reputation as a student body and to the students feeling disenfranchised by this bill.

One of the major arguments used in the passage of this bill has been brought into question. To make matters clear, there is currently no option for students to opt-out of paying fees. Rather, in actuality, there is a Student Fiscal Appeal Process, which “will consider appeals involving issues related to the application of University Student Fiscal Policy.”

The main premise of S.B. 65-70 is to “support the current standing process of allowing students who object, for religious and moral purposes, to the use of their student fees and tuition... (and) to opt-out of paying an amount equal to their share of the service funding from their fee and tuition money.” Since no such “current standing process” exists as is described in the bill, S.B. 65-70 serves no purpose. However, what this bill represents still remains and must be done away with.

Although much adjusted in its final form, the good accomplished through this bill pales in comparison to the damage done. The damage must stop today. Texas A&M students represent our core value of respect exceptionally and I’m very proud of the family at this university. Now, more than ever, is the time to show great resolve and come together, treating each other like the family that we are.

God Bless and Gig ‘Em,

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