

The Association of Big Ten Students



Legislative Docket

Winter Conference 2019

Host: Purdue University

ABTS Legislative Session

Saturday, January 26th, 2019

1:10 PM

Pfendler Hall Agriculture Building, Purdue University

Executive Director Jake Griggs and Associate Director Aidan Sova Presiding

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of the Agenda
- IV. New Business
 - A. ABTS 01.19.01 Supporting a Change to the FDA's MSM Donor Deferral Policy
 - B. ABTS 01.19.02 Supporting the Bandana Project
 - C. ABTS 01.19.03 Recognizing Survivors of Sexual Assault Through the "It's on US" Week of Action and Dear Colleague (2011) Letter
 - D. ABTS 01.19.04 Endorsing the Strengthening American Communities Act of 2018
 - E. ABTS 01.19.05 Authorizing the ABTS Executive Board to File for Fiscal Sponsorship
 - F. ABTS 01.19.06 Supporting Medical Amnesty Policies
 - G. 2019 ABTS Federal Legislative Platform
- V. Old Business
 - A. None
- VI. Adjournment

Link to view minutes:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1H1CoGnuOC_Ci3DGmPU6goN3k7zBc5iQWJR6zhkkSqzw/edit

ABTS 01.19.01

A Resolution to Support a Change to the FDA's MSM Donor Deferral Policy

Sponsor: Michigan State University

Whereas, The FDA's current policy on blood donation from MSM (men who have had sex with men¹) donors states that blood donation establishments shall, "Defer for 12 months from the most recent contact a man who has had sex with another man during the past 12 months";

Whereas, This policy has a historically discriminatory origin, originating during the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s;

Whereas, The one year deferral does not adequately address or mitigate the discriminatory nature of the ban, and further stigmatizes and targets gay men, almost insinuating that HIV/AIDS is something that is limited to MSM individuals²;

Whereas, This one year deferral policy is almost as exclusive as a lifetime ban;

Whereas, More than 615,000 pints of blood are turned away each year due to the donors being either gay or bisexual³;

Whereas, It is estimated that this blood could help to save the lives of 1.8 million people annually;

Whereas, Many college students at MSU and across the Big Ten find themselves unable to not only donate blood, but also unable to participate in official blood donation challenges between schools;

Whereas, In the 53rd Session of ASMSU, a bill was passed in support of changing this policy and in support of the Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) legislation in the Winter of 2017 addressing this policy;

Whereas, It is essential to continue to advocate for these issues and for MSM individuals and marginalized students as one of the most important and inclusive bodies of representation for these students at Big Ten universities;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Association of Big Ten Students will continue to advocate for an end to the discriminatory one year deferral policy of the FDA for MSM blood donors.

¹<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/BiologicsBloodVaccines/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/Guidances/Blood/UCM446580.pdf>

²<https://www.blood-equality.com/quick-facts/?fbclid=IwAR2VebhlsCeZNIJepqXtWXu72yUxT04BTck5wfazCAZVSEs1zHdrrp9xzMSc>

³ *Ibid.*

ABTS 01.19.02

A Resolution in Support of The Bandana Project

Sponsor: University of Iowa

Whereas, in recent years there has been an increase in depression among college students – rising from 32.6% in 2013 to 40.2%, and thoughts about suicide increasing 3.4% with an increase in actual suicide attempts;¹

Whereas, the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide prevents those struggling seeking help, and despite decreases, the presence of the stigma around mental health remains unacceptably present on college campuses while showing compassion for mental health issues is a common way to remove the stigma;^{2,3}

Whereas, through The Bandana Project, green bandanas are distributed to students on campus to be tied to backpacks as a show of solidarity and serve as an indicator that the student has resource cards directing students to mental health resources;

Whereas, at the University of Wisconsin, The Bandana Project launched and so far over 6,000 bandanas have already been distributed on campus;

Therefore be it resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students affirms its support for universities taking steps to increase mental health awareness and solidarity for those struggling through campaigns such as The Bandana Project;

Be it further resolved, the contents of The Bandana Project packet attached be modified to reflect appropriate resources on each Big Ten university campus in order to adequately launch the initiative;⁴

Be it finally resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students check the progress of The Bandana Projects, address mental health initiatives, and encourage growth of mental well-being programs on campuses annually at the Winter Conference.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/02/well/preventing-suicide-among-college-students.html>

² <https://www.nami.org/blogs/nami-blog/october-2017/9-ways-to-fight-mental-health-stigma>

³ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477>

⁴ <https://www.namiuw.org/the-bandana-project.html>

ABTS 01.19.03

A Bill Recognizing Survivors of Sexual Assault Through the “It’s On US” Week of Action and Dear Colleague (2011) Letter

Sponsors: University of Iowa, University of Michigan

Whereas, the “It’s On US” week of action began as an initiative in 2014 from the White House Task Force to Prevent Sexual Assault in order to bring awareness to the conversation of sexual violence;

Whereas, the “It’s On US” campaign has generated 300,000+ signatures of a pledge from individuals across the country to take a stance against sexual violence;

Whereas, the “It’s On US” campaign was created by President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden to give tools to college students nationwide on how to act upon acts of sexual assault;

Whereas, one in three women and one in six men have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime in the United States;

Whereas, the 2011 “Dear Colleague Letter” (2011 DCL) expanded the 2001 “Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance” with additional explanation in 2014 “Questions and Answers on Title IX Sexual Violence” (2014 QA);

Whereas, 2011 DCL and 2014 QA laid out important guiding principles and practices for Title IX recipients, including the establishment of an expansive and proactive definition of “sexual harassment” as well as establishing the requirement that recipients of federal funds needed to investigate complaints alleging sexual harassment even if the harassment allegedly occurred outside the recipients activity or program;

Whereas, recently proposed federal regulations would significantly narrow the definition of “sexual harassment” and alleviate recipients their current responsibility to investigate complaints alleging sexual harassment outside the recipient’s activity or program;

Whereas, the recently proposed federal regulations do not enjoin recipients from enforcing a more expansive definition of “sexual harassment”, and doing so outside of their activity or program, under codes of conduct;

Whereas, it is in the best interest of students at our universities and across the nation that an expansive definition of “sexual harassment” be used in disciplinary cases and that universities take on an active role in enforcing policies against sex-based discrimination and sexual harassment, even outside their activity or program, through their codes of conduct;

Therefore be it resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students supports and encourages its member universities to support updates to student codes of conduct that expand disciplinary policies to include enforcement against off-campus instances of sexual harassment involving students;

Be it further resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students supports and encourages its member universities to support disciplinary policies that include processes for addressing complaints of sexual

harassment in instances where the alleged conduct would not be classified as sexual harassment under the recently-proposed Title IX federal regulations;

Be it further resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students calls on the Presidents and administrations of our respective member universities to continue to honor and uphold the rules and guidance of the *Dear Colleague Letter*⁴ (2011);

Be it further resolved, each Big Ten University recognizes the “It’s On US” Week of Action through their respective student governments through encouraging students to take the pledge against sexual violence, or whatever advocacy efforts deem fit by that University;

Be it finally resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students stands with all victims of sexual violence and will continue to advocate on their behalf through each Big Ten institution’s student government.

⁴ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html>

<https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>

https://www.itsonus.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/IOU_CampaignOrganizingTools_FINAL_7.27.pdf

<http://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2018/09/12/campus-sexual-harassment-amy-carleton>

ABTS 01.19.04

A Resolution Endorsing the Strengthening American Communities Act

Sponsors: University of Maryland, University of Nebraska

Whereas, the Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) represents over 430,000+ undergraduate students across the Big Ten;

Whereas, the ABTS has a responsibility to advocate for the legislative interests of the student bodies of the 14 campuses;

Whereas, interacting with legislators and advocating for the support of the Strengthening American Communities Act will serve ABTS' represented undergraduate student bodies;

Whereas, undergraduate students are limited from a career in public service due to the prohibitively high cost of a college education⁵ and lower compensation for employment in the public sector⁶;

Whereas, job opportunities are becoming available in the public sector for graduating students with many federal employees workers nearing the age of retirement⁷;

Whereas, the Strengthening American Communities Act will create the National Public Service Grant to provide funding for students at four-year institutions, such as Big Ten Universities, with the requirement of three years of public service;

Whereas, the Strengthening American Communities Act will create the Debt-Free Loan Forgiveness Program to expedite the loan forgiveness process and reduce the pressure of loans on students serving the public sector;

Whereas, college-level students have been found to have better academic performance interacting with others from different racial and cultural backgrounds⁸;

⁵www.forbes.com/sites/camilomaldonado/2018/07/24/price-of-college-increasing-almost-8-times-faster-than-wages/#7653162f66c1

⁶ www.cbo.gov/publication/52637

⁷www.federaltimes.com/smr/50-years-federal-times/2015/12/07/how-opm-will-build-a-federal-workforce-of-the-future/

⁸ tcf.org/content/report/how-rationally-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/?agreed=1

Whereas, the ABTS has previously demonstrated support for minority students through lobbying efforts to support undocumented students; creating a Middle Eastern/Northern African Identity Category; support Diversity and Inclusion within the Big Ten⁹;

Whereas, the ABTS has supported federal issues impacting undergraduate students including but not limited to textbook affordability; consent education; improved mental health initiatives; campus accountability and safety¹⁰;

Therefore be it resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students supports the Strengthening American Communities Act of 2018, S.2984, in Addendum A¹¹;

Be it further resolved, the Association of Big Ten Students will work vigilantly to inform legislators of positions through literature and lobbying.

Addendum A

In support of:

S.2984 - Strengthening American Communities Act of 2018
115th Congress (2017-2018)

BILL Hide Overview ✕

Sponsor: [Sen. Cardin, Benjamin L. \[D-MD\]](#) (Introduced 05/24/2018)

Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Latest Action: Senate - 05/24/2018 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker:
Introduced

⁹ www.abts10.org/legislation

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2984/text

ABTS 01.19.05

A Bill to Authorize the ABTS Executive Board to File for Fiscal Sponsorship

Co-Sponsors: University of Iowa, Michigan State University

Authors: Patrick B. Phillips, Treasurer (Association of Big Ten Students)

Robert J. Griggs, Executive Director (Association of Big Ten Students)

*with additional advisory from the Executive Board of the Association of Big Ten Students,
Student Body Presidents, and Big Ten Campus Liaisons*

Background

The Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) is an organization whose mission is to increase information sharing and networking among university student governments, serving as the active, collective voice of the students of the Big Ten Conference. We channel information from the federal government to the student governments of the Big Ten universities, create programming opportunities for student governments to engage with their constituencies on relevant national topics, host seasonal conferences, and advocate on behalf of the Big Ten undergraduate student population to the federal government.

The ABTS has successfully carried out this mission year in and year out, though it has become obvious that improvements need to be made in order to ensure that the organization remains sustainable for future generations of student leaders. The current model of funding conferences, specifically Big Ten on the Hill, places a great burden on delegate schools. They are often asked to front large sums, paid back over time to allow these events the proper timelines they need to be organized and executed. The ABTS, in an ideal world, should not be a burden on its delegate schools. These struggles stem largely from the current, largely informal nature of the ABTS. Due to the fact that the ABTS is not a formalized organization at any delegate school, nor a recognized organization by the federal government or any state government, the ABTS has little financial flexibility, making it entirely reliant on its delegate organizations to remain operational. Additionally, there are several expenses such as maintenance of the ABTS website and domain names that are paid for out-of-pocket by members of the ABTS Executive Board. Entering into a fiscal sponsorship with the National Campus Leadership Council would alleviate many of these concerns and allow the ABTS to remain operational well into the future.

Project Description

The goals of the ABTS are to accomplish its mission through coordination of the delegate schools in the pursuit of improving student life on campus, as well as advocating for student rights at the local, state, and federal levels of government. We accomplish these goals through:

- **Programming:** The ABTS hosts a winter conference and a summer conference where representatives from each delegate school convene to discuss issues they are facing on their respective campuses, as well as legislative issues concerning their constituents. Delegates share ideas, best practices, and aid each other in the pursuit of improving student life on campus. In addition, the host school will invite guest speakers, ranging

from U.S. Representatives to University presidents, to speak to the delegations in attendance. An ABTS conference will typically have 80-90 attendants.

- **Advocacy:** The ABTS hosts an annual Big Ten on the Hill conference where the delegate schools again convene, this time with a focus on federal legislative issues that would affect each member institution's undergraduate student life. Representatives from each delegate school schedule and attend in-person meetings with U.S. Representatives and Senators, as well as informational sessions with the Education staffers from the House and Senate. Outside of Big Ten on the Hill, ABTS coordinates the efforts of their delegate schools' Governmental Affairs personnel, advocating through the use of social media accounts and other avenues.

The ABTS and the NCLC have collaborated extensively in the past, with the NCLC participating in multiple ABTS conferences and assisting with the development of the legislative platform used by the ABTS. Expanding collaboration by initiating a fiscal sponsorship is the natural progression in a longstanding, mutually beneficial relationship.

Support & Budget

As a project of the NCLC, the ABTS would not ask for tangible financial support from the NCLC to continue operating. Rather, entering into a fiscal sponsorship is a future-oriented move to provide the opportunity for legitimization and for the ability of the ABTS to raise and hold funds, which it has never previously been able to do. A new position on the ABTS Executive Board would be created with the sole job of managing fundraising efforts through the targeting of ABTS alumni, alumni of delegate schools with previous involvement in ABTS, and potentially the administrations of the delegate schools themselves. The goal would be to continue operations as they are now while minimizing the financial burden on delegate schools over time. Having funds available to the organization would also allow the ABTS to sponsor relevant research studies on student-related federal issues, which would enhance the quality of advocacy to legislators.

Decision-making

Control of the logistic operations of the ABTS would remain with the ABTS Executive Board, including the planning of the summer, winter, and Big Ten on the Hill conferences. The individual responsible for the ABTS within NCLC would be updated on these decisions as soon as they are made. The ABTS, as a collection of its Executive Board and its delegate schools led by their respective Student Body Presidents, would have control over and final say in the legislative platform of the ABTS to ensure autonomy and their mission in representing the students of the Big Ten universities. Any use of the funds contained in the ABTS Project Budget would have to be approved by the NCLC for any uses other than what is previously agreed upon (i.e. if one day there is an amount set aside for conferences every year).

Discussion

Whereas, the Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) is an organization whose mission is to increase information sharing and networking among university student governments, serving as the active, collective voice of the students of the Big Ten Conference;

Whereas, the goal of ABTS is to accomplish its mission through coordination of the delegate schools in the pursuit of improving student life on campus, as well as advocating for student rights at the local, state, and federal levels of government;

Whereas, there has been a lasting need to remove the financial burden of conference financing, namely that of Big Ten on the Hill, off of the Big Ten student government organizations;

Whereas, fiscal sponsorship refers to the practice of non-profit organizations offering their legal and tax-exempt status to groups – typically projects – engaged in activities related to the sponsoring organization's mission;

Whereas, a fiscal sponsorship as a project under the National Campus Leadership Council (NCLC) would allow ABTS to begin raising funds, open a bank account, utilize administrative advertisement, and obtain insurance; all of these actions are critical to advancing the mission of the ABTS and those they have been unable to do to date;

Whereas, ABTS will maintain its sovereignty and autonomy because sponsored projects maintain their own 501(c)(3) status, handle their own funds, and all charitable donations to the project; including the control of ABTS Executive Board and respective host schools over the planning and logistical operations of the summer, winter, and Big Ten on The Hill conferences; rather, entering into a fiscal sponsorship is a future-oriented move to provide the opportunity for legitimization;

Whereas, ABTS, as a collection of its Executive Board and its delegate schools led by their respective Student Body Presidents, would have control over and final say in the legislative platform of the ABTS to ensure autonomy and their mission in representing the students of the Big Ten universities;

Whereas, ABTS would similarly have control over and final say in any ABTS press releases or official communication without requiring approval;

Whereas, the relationship between ABTS and NCLC will be only an assistantship, which means that as a project of NCLC, ABTS would not ask for tangible financial support from the NCLC to continue operating;

Whereas, cooperative efforts between the NCLC, the ABTS Executive Board, the student body presidents, and the campus liaisons have been taking place for three years;

Whereas, a new position on the ABTS Executive Board would be created with the sole job of managing fundraising efforts through the targeting of ABTS alumni, alumni of delegate schools with previous involvement in ABTS, and potentially the administrations of the delegate schools themselves;

Whereas, the ABTS independent decision-making process remains unimpeded and uninfluenced by the NCLC as outlined in the concept paper;

Therefore be it resolved, the ABTS Executive Board is authorized to proceed to enter into a fiscal sponsorship with the NCLC, as a project of the latter, effective pending the NCLC, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the voting ABTS student government presidents, and contractual approval. The ABTS executive board is to propose the finalized contractual agreements by March 8, 2019. The Big Ten student body presidents are to vote by March 23, 2019.

Association of Big Ten Schools Resolution: ##.##.##

Resolution Supporting Medical Amnesty **Co-Sponsors: University of Minnesota**

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT MEDICAL AMNESTY POLICIES.

Concerning: Establishing or expanding the accessibility and conditions of medical amnesty policies on all Big Ten Schools member campuses to include all alcohol and non-alcohol incidents where one's mental or physical health is at risk.

Whereas, Roughly 58 percent of college students aged 18 to 22 report drinking alcohol within the past month, and 38 percent reporting binge drinking.¹²

Whereas, Nearly 63 percent of underage alcohol consumers engaged in binge drinking behavior in 2016.¹³

Whereas, The consequences of alcohol-related incidents for college students is severe, including nearly 1900 deaths, 696,000 physical assaults, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault annually.¹⁴

Whereas, Among young people aged 18 to 25, 23 percent reported illicit drug use within the past month in 2016. Such illicit drugs may include categories of illegal drugs and improper use or abuse of legal drugs.¹⁵

Whereas, Overdose deaths¹⁶ among youth ages 15-24 are currently increasing; in 2016, overdose deaths from this age group increased 28 percent from the previous year.

Whereas, The Association of Big Ten Students has previously accepted the definition of Medical Amnesty policies to include: "...policies which protect those who inform the correct authorities about medical emergencies related to alcohol and drugs and those who suffer from these emergencies from criminal liability."¹⁷

Whereas, A non-alcohol incident is considered a medical emergency resulting from the consumption of a controlled substance, including prescription drugs.

¹² <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/statistics/prevalence.aspx>

¹³ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2016/NSDUH-FFR1-2016.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/statistics/consequences.aspx>

¹⁵ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FFR1-2016/NSDUH-FFR1-2016.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Stop-the-Campus-Opioid/244802>

¹⁷ https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/96bc60_4b4bb77107b9456d85c6ee77d271e66c.pdf

Whereas, Institutional Medical Amnesty policies are distinguished as applying to formal sanctions or punishment resulting from violations of the affected student’s University policies, rules, or regulations.

Whereas, There are varying institutional Medical Amnesty policies among Big Ten universities and their respective states of residence.

Whereas, Six Big Ten universities have institutional Medical Amnesty policies that are inclusive of alcohol and non-alcohol incidents.

Whereas, Five Big Ten universities have institutional Medical Amnesty policies that apply to only alcohol-related incidents.

Whereas, Three Big Ten universities do not have formal institutional Medical Amnesty policies for any incidents involving alcohol or non-alcohol emergencies.

Whereas, Nine states where Big Ten universities reside have legal Medical Amnesty for minor consumption in alcohol-related incidents.¹⁸

Whereas, Only five states where Big Ten universities reside have legal Medical Amnesty from arrests, charges, or prosecutions relating to drug overdoses.¹⁹

Whereas, The University of Iowa implemented institutional Medical Amnesty for victim/survivors of sexual assault in 2015, and experienced an increase in reported assaults²⁰ to the university following student government advocacy and the resulting student conduct policy changes.

Whereas, Victim/survivors of sexual assault that choose to report to the University of Minnesota are provided with amnesty for violations of University policy regarding alcohol and non-alcohol violations of University policy related to their assault.²¹

Whereas, Only four Big Ten universities have Medical Amnesty for sexual assault victim/survivors.²²

Whereas, A victim/survivor of sexual assault as anyone who has suffered from an act of nonconsensual sexual violence.

Therefore be it resolved, The Association of Big Ten Students urges all Big Ten universities to implement institutional Medical Amnesty policies that are inclusive of alcohol and non-alcohol incidents.

¹⁸ <https://www.medicalamnesty.org/>

¹⁹ <http://pdaps.org/datasets/good-samaritan-overdose-laws-1501695153>

²⁰ <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/public-safety/university-of-iowa-rape-statistics-sexual-assault-on-campus-20181005>

²¹ <https://policy.umn.edu/hr/sexharassassault>

²² <https://ssdp.org/campus-policy-gradebook/>

Therefore be it further resolved, The Association of Big Ten Students urges all Big Ten universities to implement institutional Medical Amnesty policies for victim/survivors that are inclusive of alcohol and non-alcohol incidents.

Therefore be it further resolved, The Association of Big Ten Students encourages Big Ten universities to engage in efforts to educate the campus community on the presence of institutional and legal medical amnesty for students and victim/survivors of sexual assault, and also to consider harm reduction best practices in future actions related to non-alcohol substance use and medical amnesty.

Therefore be it further resolved, The Association of Big Ten Students urges the States in which Big Ten universities reside to adopt Medical Amnesty standards that are inclusive of alcohol and non-alcohol incidents into law.

Therefore be it finally resolved, The Association of Big Ten Students urges the States in which Big Ten universities reside to adopt Medical Amnesty standards for victim/survivors that are inclusive of alcohol and non-alcohol incidents into law.

2019 ABTS Federal Legislative Agenda

The Association of Big Ten Students is a coalition of all 14 Big Ten Conference universities and advocates on behalf of over 500,000 students across the United States. The goal of this agenda is to make college more affordable, improve campus safety and protect current students, and increase transparency and accountability in higher education institutions.

Pass the Aim Higher Act (H.R.6543) [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

- Among adults under the age of 30, about 37% say they have outstanding student loans from their education. Young college graduates with student loans are about twice as likely to have a second job and report struggling financially than those without student loan debt.¹
- The Aim Higher Act is a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. It incentivizes states to reinvest in higher education, as well as provides tools for students to find success in their educational careers and graduate with a high-quality degree. It places new limits on for-profit institutions that have traditionally trapped students and veterans in expensive, low-quality degree programs. Additionally, the Act aims to strengthen the quality of our schools by improving trainings for teachers and other leaders on campuses.
- The Act makes a college education more affordable by investing in federal student aid in addition to helping states make public college tuition more affordable moving forward. It aims to reduce the increasing financial burden of attaining a college degree by protecting and expanding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program that makes student loans simpler to understand and repay.
- In addition to increased support for federal aid programs, the Aim Higher Act will allow the federal government to increase funding for Pell Grants, TRIO, and GEAR UP, programs that help students achieve success in college.

Pass the Affordable College Textbook Act (S.1864/H.R.3840) [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

- From 2002 to 2012, the average price of new textbooks increased by 82%. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the average student attending a four-year public institution of higher education spent around \$1,250 on textbooks and supplies alone.¹
- The Affordable College Textbook Act, introduced to the House and Senate in September of 2017, aims to lower the cost of textbooks by expanding the use of Open Educational Resources at U.S. colleges and universities.^{1,2} Open Educational Resources are “free, online academic materials that are released under a license permitting everyone to use, adapt, and share the content.” OERs are available to be accessed online by students and teachers alike at no cost.³
- The Affordable College Textbook Act would create a competitive grant program to fund institutions that expand the use of open textbooks for their students. The programs will require that schools commit to evaluating the quality of their open textbook resources and how much students save. These federal grant programs are necessary to significantly lower the costs of college textbooks and reduce financial barriers to achieving a quality education.

Pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R.6545) [1](#), [2](#)

- According to the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study Final Technical Report by the U.S. Department of Justice, one in five women in college experiences sexual assault. In addition, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or gay are more likely to experience sexual assault than women who identify as heterosexual/straight.¹
- The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018 will reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act in effect before December of 2018. The original Act put into place judicial tools to combat violence against women and give protection to survivors of abuse.
- The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018 aims to reauthorize these services as well as prohibit the sale of firearms to people subject to protection orders and people convicted of stalking.²

Pass the Abby Honold Act (S.2266/H.R.4720)^{1,2}

- 23.1% of undergraduates who identify as women and 5.4% of undergraduates who identify as men have reported experiencing sexual assault. Overall rates of reporting to campus officials and law enforcement are low, ranging from 5% to 28% depending on the specific type of behavior.
- The Abby Honold Act would create a two-year test program during which the Department of Justice would award grants to police departments to give better training to investigators when they interview sexual assault victims.
- This bill promotes the use of trauma-informed techniques when responding to and acting on sexual assault crimes. This training aims to make the process more respectful and comfortable for the victim. Additionally, it would make it more likely for assailants to face criminal charges.^{1,2}

Pass the Strengthening American Communities Act of 2018 (S.2984)^{1,2}

- Undergraduate students in the United States are often limited from public service careers due to the high cost of a college education.¹
- The Strengthening America's Communities Act will create the National Public Service Grant to give funding to students at four-year institutions so long as they work in public service for three years. Additionally, the Act will create the Debt-Free Loan Forgiveness Program in order to make the loan forgiveness process more efficient and to lower the pressures of outstanding student loans on students serving the public sector. Through new partnerships with states and "Indian Tribes," which will now be referred to as Native American Tribal Nations, eligible students will have community college tuition and fees waived.²
- The Strengthening American Communities Act will allow many students an opportunity to work in public service that would not be there if there was no loan forgiveness program. The Act will also assist Native American students, a population generally underrepresented in higher education, in attending institutions of higher education without a great financial burden.
- ABTS supports the Strengthening American Communities Act as an effect of *ABTS 01.19.04 - A Resolution to Support the Strengthening American Communities Act of 2018*.

Pass a Permanent Legislative Solution to the Rescission of DACA^{1,2,3}

- DACA protects approximately 800,000 undocumented immigrants to the United States, all of whom arrived as children, from being deported. These people are pursuing an education, serving in the military, and contributing to our economy.¹
- The Dream Act of 2017 provides DACA-eligible individuals a path to citizenship, as well as stops the removal proceedings of those that meet the Dream Act requirements. The Act would also change rules that limit undocumented students' and other immigrants' abilities to access in-state tuition and financial aid from states and institutions.^{2,3}
- ABTS supports the passage of comprehensive legislation that will protect DACA recipients from deportations, specifically the kinds of protections detailed in Dream Act of 2017 (S.1615/H.R.3440).

Reject the Department of Education's Current Proposals to Changes in Title IX and Support Comprehensive Action that Holds Institutions Accountable for Acting on Reports of Sexual Misconduct^{1,2}

- In 2019, the Department of Education proposed several changes to Title IX and how colleges and universities are expected to respond to reports of sexual misconduct. Many changes were made that would decrease institutions' liability in responding to those reports. The proposed changes would redefine sexual harassment to decrease the scope of the actions that can be reported on college campuses, decrease the amount of mandatory reporters on college campuses, require institutions to investigate only those incidents that occurred on campus or at an academic event, and require cross-examination of both parties involved in misconduct hearings.^{1,2}
- ABTS supports survivors of sexual assault and harassment and urges Congress to reject the Department of Education's current plan to alter aspects of Title IX. ABTS urges Congress to support policy on sexual misconduct that is survivor-focused and requires that colleges and universities investigate all instances of sexual misconduct that students report.
- ABTS encourages the Department of Education to implement the policy guidelines outlined in the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter.