

1 **Associated Student Government**
2 *University of Arkansas*



4 *ASG Senate Bill No. 2*

5 Author(s): Senator Colton Simpson, Chair of Senate Caleb Parker,
6 Former ASG President Jared Pinkerton

7 Sponsor(s): Senator Lily Jones, Senator Hope Davenport, Senator Sophie Hill,
8 Senator Max Sutton, Senator Jesus Perera

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10 **The Voting Reform Act of 2020**

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12 Whereas, Each year during an Associated Student Government
13 election or referendum ballot, thousands of University of
14 Arkansas students cast votes that allow their voices to be
15 heard regarding the questions and candidates proposed; and
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17 Whereas, Currently there are four options given to the students on
18 their ballots during Associated Student Government
19 elections; and
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21 Whereas, The options are a positive or affirming vote (yes), a negative
22 or dissenting vote (no), a prefer not to respond vote, and a
23 skip option that allows voters to skip the question asked; and
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25 Whereas, Candidates and referendum questions are required to get a
26 majority of votes cast which is defined as 50% of the vote +1;
27 and
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29 Whereas, Title VI Section 4 G of the ASG Code currently states
30 “Candidates for an Executive Office must receive a majority
31 of votes cast in the corresponding election. If no candidate
32 receives a majority vote, a run-off election shall occur”; and
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34 Whereas, Votes cast for yes, no, and prefer not respond are all
35 calculated into total votes cast while the “Skip Question”
36 option is not; and
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38 Whereas, In two of the past three ASG elections, there have been only
39 two ballot options for the ASG Executive Offices where a
40 simple majority was achieved, but the inclusion of the prefer
41 not to respond option in majority calculation forced a run-off
42 election; and

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Whereas, Prefer not to respond and Skip Question both serve the same purpose on the ballot: to give voters the option to abstain from voting on the question; and

Whereas, This creates a voting redundancy that forces unnecessary run-off elections such as in the general elections of 2018 and 2020; and

Whereas, The Office of Student Activities has no requirements to include a “Prefer not to respond” option or any option that is taken into account when calculating a majority vote, and several OSA staff members have expressed frustration with the inclusion of such options; and

Whereas, No other candidate can be added to the ballot once an election has begun, therefor one of the original options for the executive office will be elected eventually; and

Whereas, If Prefer not to respond and Skip Question were consolidated, it would prevent this issue from happening while still giving students the opportunity to vote yes, no, or to abstain; and

Whereas, A consolidation of the Skip Question and Prefer not to respond options on ASG Election ballots would ensure that future elections are won by a simple majority vote, similarly to how local, state, and national elections operate; then

Be it therefore resolved: That Title VI Section I J be amended to state “Ballots for a referendum question provide voters three options which are “yes”, “no” and “skip question””; and

Be it further resolved: That Title VI Section 1 J c. be amended to state “By selecting” skip question”, a voter is indicating they prefer to abstain from voting on the question. Selecting “skip question” does not count as a vote cast and does not factor into total votes cast. Skip question responses should not be used when calculating if a majority of votes was received for the referendum question.”; and

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87 Be it further resolved:

That Title VI Section 1 K be amended to state
“Ballots for executive elections must include all
eligible candidates as well as a “skip question”
option. Votes cast for “skip question” are not
counted as votes cast and should not be used
when calculating if a majority of votes was
received.

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94 *Official Use Only*

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96 Amendments: _____

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98 Vote Count: Aye 47 Nay 0 Abstentions 0

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100 Legislation Status: Passed _____ Failed _____ Other _____

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103 _____ _____
Caleb Parker, ASG Chair of the Senate Date

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106 _____ _____
Julia Nall, ASG President Date