

BILL: S2017 – SB12
TITLE: College Handbook Amendment – Protest Policy Reform
SPONSOR: Travis Sanderson, Co-Chair of Community Council
Kyle Wright, Brainerd Senator
DATE: April 12, 2017

Whereas Middlebury College has experienced four significant protest events in the last five months alone, four times more than the previous year

Whereas protest is a method for students to not only be heard, but compel decisive actions from relevant institutions and bodies on campus

Whereas the College Handbook's Demonstrations and Protests section discourages all disruptive action, “[including] purposeful blocking the view of others at the event; banners or items that block the audience's view; noise or action that disrupts the ability of the audience to hear (e.g., shouting out or use of a bull horn) or disrupting essential operations at the College.”

Whereas College Handbook policy currently holds that violations may “result in arrest and criminal charges such as disorderly contact or trespass.”

Whereas both arrest and criminal charges are associated with police violence and the carceral state, which law professor Michelle Alexander refers to as “the New Jim Crow”

Whereas these associations could contribute to psychological trauma for marginalized students held accountable for disruption through arrest or criminal charges

Whereas criminal charges disproportionately hurt marginalized people's opportunities and acceptance in wider society post-graduation

Whereas the College Handbook holds that "Public Safety has the authority to respond to acts of violence, threats of violence, or overcrowding without first contacting the event hosts."

Whereas the above language does not include any prohibition on the use of violence by Public Safety officers against students who engage in disruption

Therefore, be it enacted...

That, Middlebury College Handbook: Demonstrations and Protests modify the third paragraph's final sentence to the following language:

"Violent disruption may also result in arrest and criminal charges such as disorderly conduct or trespass."

That, Middlebury College Handbook: Demonstrations and Protests remove "may not be confrontational" from the following:

"Distribution of materials such as leaflets may not be confrontational and must allow people to decline to receive the materials."

That, Middlebury College Handbook: Demonstrations and Protests include the clause:

"Public Safety, as well as outside security and contractors hired by Middlebury College or its affiliates, not including state or federal law enforcement, may not use violent force against students unless they, or another individual, are first acted upon violently by those students."

That, Middlebury College reconsider any discipline leveled against students involved in the protests against Charles Murray and Middlebury College that were founded in the wording of the College Handbook prior to the passing of this bill.

That, Middlebury College administration, faculty council, staff council, and any other deciding bodies include representatives of the Student Government Association and Community Council in any and all conversations and decisions pertaining to amendment of the College Handbook policy in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Travis Sanderson, Co-Chair of Community Council

Kyle Wright, Brainerd Senator

Vote Count

In favor: President Toy, Senator Lantigua, Senator Pustejovsky, Senator Waddell, Senator Duran (proxy), Senator Fisher, Senator Ou, Senator Wright, Senator Andrews, Co-Chair Sanderson.

Opposed: Senator Aaron, Senator Goldfield, Senator McCormick

Abstained: Senator Hayes (proxy)

Absent: Senator Cohen, Senator Wilson, Senator McCarthy

S2017-SB12 passes 10-3-1