



PETITION & LEGISLATION GUIDE

Ver. 1.0 | November 2021

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This resource is designed to help you engage in your fraternity's or sorority's governing processes. Most social fraternal organizations offer opportunities for members or pre-approved delegates to vote at business meetings. Business meetings traditionally take place every one or two years at an organization's "Convention" or "Conclave."

Your fraternity will have specific instructions and rules to follow in order to submit legislation. This may be accessible on your organization's public website and should be explained in your organization's Constitution and/or Bylaws. You can request a copy of your fraternity's governing documents from your inter/national office or leaders.

PETITIONS

One way to express your views within your organization is to submit a petition/letter to the leaders of your fraternity. Leaders are most likely not required to take action or to respond to a letter or petition unless otherwise stated in your fraternity's governing documents.

TIPS

1. Distribute your petition/letter as an online document. If you are seeking handwritten signatures, include instructions that others download the document and distribute it within their chapter/alumni group. Include instructions for them to scan and upload/email a copy back to you.
2. Gather signatures of individuals rather than a whole chapter or alumni group signing off. Ask that those who sign your letter or petition include their year of initiation and any executive positions they currently hold in the organization.
3. Check your fraternity's governing documents. Your leaders may be required to respond to a letter or petition, but only if it is submitted a certain way (e.g. via certified mail).
4. Mind the language and tone of your petition letter. You and others may be frustrated or angry, but the goal of your petition should be to explain your position, not to target or blame any group or person.
5. Rather than collecting signatures in a table on a single letter (as is shown below), you can distribute a standard letter for others to sign and send on their own. The effect of many people sending the same (or similarly worded) petitions is essentially the same as having many signatures on one document. That said, it may frustrate or annoy those you are trying to persuade.



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Directions: Copy the text of the sample petition letter below and replace the red text with your own. You may choose to include or exclude the “email &/or address” section from your signature table. Place the signature table on a separate page so that it can be easily distributed and attached to a single copy of the letter.

SAMPLE PETITION TEXT & FORMAT

(Month)(Day)(Year)

(Recipient’s Title, First Name, and Last Name)

(Fraternity’s Street Address)

(City), (State) (Zip Code)

Re: State the topic. If you are referring to a particular publication, then include the name of the publication, the date it was published, and where it was published (e.g. a magazine, website, podcast, etc.)

Dear (Executive Director’s/CEO’s/National President’s/Recipient's name),

We the undersigned wish to express our concerns (regarding. . . state the issue) and request (state whether you would like a response, immediate action, access to certain information, etc.)

1. If you are requesting several actions or items
2. List them using numbers
3. So that it is easy for the recipient to respond to each item

Petition Organizer:

Print your First Name, Last Name, Title (If applicable), Email Address &/or Mailing Address

Sign your First Name and Last Name _____ Date: _____

Print First & Last Name	Position (If applicable)	Email &/or Address	Signature	Date
Roger Rogers	Alpha Chapter President	rogerrogers@rogerrogers.net	(if digital then just re-type name)	11/01/21



LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS & CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

A direct way to initiate action within your fraternity is to submit a legislative bill to be voted on by the members of your organization. Some organizations maintain processes to vote on bills throughout the year. Others may require that these matters be discussed and voted upon at a business meeting associated with a “Convention” or “Conclave.”

Resolutions are typically votes which do not result in a change to your organization’s governing documents or policies. Delegates vote on resolutions to signal a position or desire of the organization. For example, you may vote that the official minutes/record show that your fraternity wants to thank a past leader or that it organize a committee to review its crest or creed.

Amendments are used to alter the governing documents or policies of your fraternity. These may have a separate submission process compared to a Resolution and may require a different voting procedure or different threshold to pass. For example, your fraternity may conduct a “voice vote” and require a “simple majority” (50%+1) to pass a Resolution, but it may require a “secret ballot vote” and a 3/4 majority (75%) to change its Constitution or Bylaws.

TIPS

1. Check your fraternity’s governing documents. Your fraternity likely requires that you submit legislative proposals within a certain time period and in a certain format (e.g. certified mail).
2. As with a petition, you can attach a page of signatures to your proposal. Some organizations may require that an undergraduate or alumni chapter vote upon a legislative proposal before it can be considered by the inter/national fraternity.
3. If your fraternity has an inter/national parliamentarian, consider running your legislative proposal by them first to ensure that it is appropriately formatted.
4. The format for a Resolution or Amendment is likely identical for your fraternity. The only difference is the intended outcome. Bills may be voted on at different times depending on if they amend the organization’s governing documents and policies or not.



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Directions: The “WHEREAS” statements should reflect the current state of Fraternity policy and why we should change the policy. The “RESOLVED” statements are the desired action if the motion is adopted. The “RESOLVED” portion will be added to the permanent record of the Fraternity, so it should reflect all proposed policy or bylaws amendments. Replace the red/shaded text with your own.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION/BILL TEXT & FORMAT

Title: Create a title explaining the general purpose of your proposal (e.g. “A constitutional amendment to establish a budget review committee”)

WHEREAS

Text for the first WHEREAS statement, keeping in mind that the entire resolution should read as one very long sentence; **and**

WHEREAS

the next line begins with lowercase and each WHEREAS ends with a semicolon and the word “and”; and

WHEREAS

each section leads to the next section until the final WHEREAS; **therefore be it**

RESOLVED

that the following actions for each resolved section; **and be it**

RESOLVED

be followed by the next section; **and be it**

FURTHER RESOLVED

and the final resolved ends in a period.

(This should be enough to have your proposal considered, but check your fraternity’s documents and ask if there is a specific template you must use or follow. If your fraternity requires that your chapter approve the proposal for it to be considered at the inter/national level, then follow its guidelines to properly report your chapter’s vote)