

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Victoria Mayo and I am a member of the Alpha Iota chapter of Alpha Chi Omega at the University of Vermont. I am writing to voice my concern about the repeal of the tax exemption for college fraternities and societies currently granted to 10 organizations. The tax exemption is said to be granted in order to exempt organizations that provide civic services, as do all of the fraternities and sororities on the University of Vermont's campus. This particular tax exemption, totaling \$160,000 and making up 0.19% of the total exemptions, has the ability to make or break overall Fraternity and Sorority Life involvement at the University of Vermont. The mean price for homes currently for sale in Burlington is \$328,000. Assuming that this home value is comparable to the value of a Fraternity or Sorority house, taxes would be about \$7,500 per year, according to the Burlington Tax Estimate website. The estimated \$7,500 in taxes is disproportionate to the average \$16,000 in taxes per house, given the tax exemption is split evenly between the 10 benefitting organizations. During this past year alone, Alpha Chi Omega has raised over \$8,500 for various local charities, including the Women Helping Battered Women Shelter and The Be Positive (B+) Foundation, an organization which assists local families with children receiving cancer treatment in paying necessary bills for hospital fees or transportation. Although I could not find the direct reference, one article I found about this change noted that there was a clause that indicated organizations that get property tax abatements should certify annually that they give more in charity than the taxes they would have paid. Given that Alpha Chi Omega, along with the other Fraternity and Sorority Life chapters, annually raise funds for civic services that exceed \$7,500, it seems to follow suit that our chapters are worthy of the tax exemption so long as we certify our charitable donations each year.

I also believe that the University's community will be negatively impacted if the tax exemption is lifted. As college students, there are many financial struggles that we face. While I feel that the values of friendship, leadership, learning, and service that I have cultivated throughout my two years in the Fraternity and Sorority Life community are priceless, the reality of the situation is that there are semester dues that will face a drastic increase if the tax exemption is revoked, making it impossible for many of the members of our organizations to continue their commitment to bettering themselves and the community through Greek Life at UVM. This loss would be devastating, not only for the members who must discontinue their involvement with such wonderful organizations, but for the entire Burlington community. Fraternity and Sorority Life members are active participants in society who are dedicated to service and can be seen in various leadership positions, whether it be in academic clubs on campus or through the organization of neighborhood clean ups. We as Fraternity and Sorority Life members know how invaluable our organizations are, and hope to share that with the broader community every day. However, with the loss of tax exemptions, many members will be forced to drop the process and even fewer will be able to join us in the upcoming years.

Similarly, the homes that our members live in do not just serve as an equivalent to a dorm room on campus. The houses owned by our organizations hold deep sentimental value to all of the chapters. The value of our homes can be seen when alumni come to visit and can recall memories of certain rooms that they, too, once held ritual in or when an old trophy or photograph is found sitting on the mantel. The loss of our homes would be an incredible devastation for not only the current chapter members, but all those who were once a part of our sister or brotherhood. My chapter house, for example, has been occupied by Alpha Chi Omega's since

1921. The history that will be lost if we can no longer afford to keep our homes is truly unimaginable.

For the above reasons, I am against the repeal of tax exemptions for college fraternities and societies. I hope that Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Vermont can continue to thrive as it has been and that the Burlington community as a whole can continue to feel our positive presence as student leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria Mayo". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Victoria Mayo
Vice President of Recruitment
Alpha Chi Omega