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Statement on Our Faculty's Freedom to Unionize

On January 26th, 2016, University of Pittsburgh faculty and graduate students [hosted a press conference](#) officially announcing the formalization of unionization efforts. Simultaneously, the University began to drastically increase payments towards a law firm known as Ballard Spahr; said payments must be publicly disclosed through the [Public School Code of 1949](#). From 2015 to 2018, yearly payments towards Ballard Spahr increased by 703% (from \$20,555 to \$144,585). In fiscal year 2020, the University spent over \$850,000 contracting the firm, resulting in the total quantity spent surpassing \$2,000,000.

Ballard Spahr's [website](#) indicates that one of the main legal services they offer is "union avoidance training and counseling". The University has not disclosed the extent to which their spending has contributed to anti-unionization efforts on campus. We call on the University to be transparent as to their spending and contribution to such anti-union efforts on our campus. We feel it is irresponsible for money that could be used to better the student experience to be given in support of a law firm known to be anti-union.

Acts like these on behalf of the University prompt an emphasis on our administration's neutrality in matters involving the faculty union election. The University should not directly or indirectly influence an election that faculty must be free to decide. The outcome of this election must be based on the unique needs of faculty members.

We, as the Student Government Board, stand in solidarity with faculty members with their freedom to vote and freedom to unionize at will.

In Solidarity,

Harshitha Ramanan
2021-2022 Student Government Board President

***Aboli Kesbhat, Danielle Floyd, Ryan Murphy, Nikhita Chakraborty, Caroline Goodwin,
Brennan Conway, Matt Moore, & Daniel Temmallo***
2021-2022 Student Government Board