

# editorials



## Pledge bill has shortcomings

In recent weeks, Elon College's Greek organizations working with Dean of Student Affairs William Long have adopted a pledge bill of rights which includes 21 regulations for fraternities and sororities to follow during their pledge periods. According to Long, the bill was formed because during past pledge periods, academic achievement dropped and some pledges believed they had been mistreated.

The formation of a pledge bill of rights admits the possibility that pledges have been mistreated in the past, but it also recognizes a willingness to prevent future abuses.

Pledges should benefit from the bill because they will be made aware of their rights before entering the pledge period. The Greek organizations may also benefit from the bill if it encourages some students to pledge who would not pledge without a written set of guidelines or ground rules.

However, the pledge bill of rights has some shortcomings. The real reason for the bill of rights seems to be to prevent hazing, yet many of the rules are vague and subject to varying interpretations.

A few of the vague rules are those that prohibit placing "severe" emotional stress on a pledge, requiring a pledge to stay at activities for an "unreasonable" amount of time, and preventing a pledge from speaking for an "extended" period. These rules are open to subjective interpretation and should be more specifically defined.

As it is, one knows that these things cannot occur within the pledge bill of rights; however, a pledge may not realize when his or her rights have been violated because how long an extended period, what an unreasonable amount of time, and how much emotional stress is considered severe are left to the individual to decide.

Assuming a pledge does determine that his rights according to the pledge bill of rights have been violated, he or she must

decide what action to take. This will determine the bill's worth. If pledges accept violations of their rights without protest, they are removing the value of a bill of rights because it would be hard for someone else to prove that any abuses occur if those being mistreated will not admit it.

On the other hand, pledges may hesitate to take advantage of the bill of rights because they do not know what the official outcome will be.

In the Pendulum's article last week "Pledge bill of rights: a Greek effort," Long was quoted as saying that if a fraternity or sorority violates the bill of rights, its charter may be revoked.

This is an extreme action and surely will not be taken for any violations that occur. Pledges need to be made aware of what actions can and will be taken if they raise a complaint and whether an entire organization will be held responsible for what may be one individual's actions.

After a pledge realizes all of the implications, should he or she choose to approach someone about a possible violation, the pledge needs to know who to talk to. The obvious people are the president of the Greek organization that the student is pledging and Long.

Pledges may hesitate to approach Long because he is a school official, and depending upon a violation, they may also feel uncomfortable speaking to the president of their group.

How well this bill of rights works will depend upon each fraternity and sorority. One suggestion that might help the bill to succeed would be for the Inter-Fraternal and Panhellenic councils to each appoint a student "rights counselor" who would be in charge of distributing copies of the pledge bill of rights, educating pledges on their rights and advising pledges who think their rights have been violated.

## Student pleased with coverage

To the editor,

As chairperson for the Performing Arts and Lectures Committee of the Student Union Board, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to you and your staff for the excellent coverage you have provided us this semester. I am very pleased to have received your support and encouragement. The excellent feature articles made people aware of our programs who would have otherwise been uninformed. Because of this exposure,

our programs were successful.

In my opinion, the Pendulum staff has done a fantastic job this year in meeting the needs of the students and campus organizations. I would like to commend you for your outstanding efforts and the accomplishments attributed to your hard work. Again, many thanks to a wonderful group of people for a job well done.

Sincerely,  
Danny Sprinkle

The Pendulum welcomes letters, limited to 250 words, from our readers. Longer material may be submitted as opinion articles for page 3. Editors reserve the right to edit for length, libel, good taste and accuracy.

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Published by the Communications Media Board of Elon College. Founded on October 14, 1974 as the student newspaper serving the Elon College community, the Pendulum is published each Thursday during the regular terms except for examination and holiday periods.