



December 12, 2023,

**RE: Letter of Support — S.1035 AN ACT TO PROTECT UNPAID INTERNS,
VOLUNTEERS, AND INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS FROM SEXUAL
HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

On behalf of the MIT Undergraduate Association, I write in strong support of S.1035. Internships have become a staple in education, being viewed as a supplement to academic coursework that has become increasingly necessary for students entering a competitive job market. Unfortunately, of the many millions of college students taking internships each year, around half of these positions are unpaid. Since unpaid interns are not considered “employees,” federal protections against discrimination and workplace harassment do not apply.

Unpaid interns are already in a fragile position, providing labor while forgoing wages in the hopes that it will provide them with experience and connections that will help their future prospects. Students applying for and taking these positions are doing their best to advance themselves— the last thing they should have to worry about is being sexually harassed or discriminated against, and having no avenue for recourse.

Furthermore, we recognize that the issues with unpaid internships extend beyond sexual harassment and discrimination protections. Since federal protections for unpaid interns in the private sector— namely, the Primary Beneficiary Test— do not apply to the public sector, protections against exploitation are not extended to a significant proportion of unpaid interns. We therefore ask for your consideration in patching this gap in labor protections for vulnerable young workers by extending the Primary Beneficiary Test to public sector workers, as well as expanding opportunities for paid internship positions in the public sector more generally.

We thank you for your continued support, and look forward to working with you and your office.

Sincerely,

Paul Irvine
Chair of Public Affairs
MIT Undergraduate Association