In response to the committee’s majority opinion and 3-2 decision, we offer the following, wherein we provide our rationale for dissenting and aim to justify our position.

The majority opinion of this committee gives lip service to the benefits of endorsements, but fails to acknowledge the great capacity of Hamilton’s organizations to increase individual participation in elections and form a more diverse representation of interests. The decision puts little faith in the unique and free ideas held by each and every Hamilton College student and for this reason prohibits students from engaging in a fundamental part of a democratic process. Although an endorsement might constitute coercion or manipulation in a few specific cases, the nature of an endorsement is itself non-coercive. Hamilton College students cast ballots privately, a standard which should assuage fears of resentment or retaliation from organizations. We find it disrespectful to our students to suggest they would not investigate candidates and form their own preferences. It is, moreover, inappropriate to appeal to a blanket presumption that organizations would abuse monetary or social capital in order to influence an election.

Specific legislative measures on internal proceedings of organizations could be taken to safeguard against or punish instances of coercion, but it is not the place of this committee to insert itself into these decisions.

For the aforementioned reasons, we assert that endorsements would not infringe on the voting rights of students, but would instead encourage students to become further involved in the balloting process.

We respectfully dissent.