**Proposed resolution for Senate consideration – December 16, 2019**

**Policy for Auditory Accessibility**

Rationale:

Public meetings can be a challenge for anyone with a hearing-related impairment, low hearing, or auditory sensitivities. Use of microphones at public meetings are accessibility tools; unfortunately, speakers may believe that they do not require a microphone because they assume their tone or volume of voice is sufficient. When a speaker refuses or neglects the microphone, they are sending a message to hearing-impaired attendees that their needs for an amplification device are less important. They are also creating a situation where those with hearing needs must step forward to say "please use the microphone" or "speak louder", thus putting the onus on the impaired person to ensure accessibility in the meeting space.  hough not intentional, this is a form of ableism. Microphones and other amplification/assistive devices are an essential way to keep the meetings inclusive to those who have hearing-related disabilities as well as those who have auditory sensitivities to overlapping conversations (i.e. cross-talk in the audience).

Reaffirming the Senate commitment to accessibility for all members and attendees;

be it resolved that Senate will:

* require speakers (i.e. Senate President, invited guests, and committee chair reports) to use the podium microphone during Senate meetings;
* endeavor to add more microphones to cover audience questions/comments as well as the Senate Executive table;
* investigate the use of live speech transcription services for Senate attendees.