University Senate
PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Matthew Popkin
Date:	October 21, 2012
Title of Proposal:	Proposal to Maintain Accurate Voting Records for Senators
Phone Number:	301-461-3210
Email Address:	mpopkin@umd.edu
Campus Address:	6801 Preinkert Drive, Apt. 7312D
Unit/Department/College:	BSOS
Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):	Undergraduate
Description of issue/concern/policy in question:	The University Senate currently utilizes electronic clickers for the purpose of voting in order to be able to see the outcome of a vote in an almost instantaneous manner. This transition to electronic clickers occurred a few years ago as the technology became available and accessible. However, as a result, there is no way of observing how Senators vote. The lack of voting records not only prevents members of the campus community from being able to see how their representatives voted on legislation affecting the campus, but also decreases the ability for constituencies to be able to be informed voters during the next election cycle and inquire as to the reasons behind their decisions and votes.
Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:	The votes of Senators in full University Senate meetings should be made available to the public on the Senate website within a week of the previous Senate meeting. A "Voting Record" page should be added to either the "Senate Meetings" or "Senators" tabs on the website. There is currently no way of tracking how Senators voted on legislation that is considered by the University Senate. This would be very helpful in providing information on which to base future Senate election votes. This would also allow constituencies the opportunity to be able to discuss a Senator's decision with him or her, so as to better understand why he or she supported or opposed legislation. Tracking and recording votes of Senators through the technology that is already utilized by the Senate would also make the shared governance body more transparent in its decision-making.

Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:	The Senate already uses electronic clickers for voting in meetings. Logistically speaking, tracking individual Senate votes only requires the registering of clicker to Senator through a participation list, which would need to be done at the start of each meeting or prior to the start of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, a spreadsheet is generated through the Turning Point software associated with the clickers for recording the specific votes. While the possibility exists that Senators could be hesitant or concerned about voting their conscience if their superiors or peers can see how they vote, the University has policies in place from which to protect individuals and to provide the opportunity to rectify such situations if they develop. These include, but are not limited to, Policy VI-1.20(A): University of Maryland Policy and Procedures on Sexual Harassment, Policy II-4.00(A): University of Maryland Policies and Procedures Governing Faculty Grievances, and Policy VII–8.00: University System of Maryland Policy on Grievances for Exempt and Nonexempt Staff Employees. Hopefully, none of the aforementioned policies will be needed, but the options exist. It is also worth noting that this opportunity for concern existed when votes were manually conducted before the Senate used electronic clickers.
Additional Information:	The Student Government Association (SGA) has transitioned to electronic clickers for the past couple of years for attendance and voting. When taking attendance at each weekly legislative meeting, representatives register their clicker (which was not previously assigned to them) with the number associated with their clicker. Overall, the experience with electronic clickers has been very successful and not very complicated. The SGA does not own the clickers that it uses, and there would be no purchase required on the part of the Senate either. This is submitted on behalf of myself as an undergraduate BSOS Senator and is not affiliated with the Student Government Association.