

Student Government Association

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

October 11, 2021



A Statement Regarding Randy Boyd

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Student Government Association, denounces the University of Tennessee System's President Randy Boyd and his support for State Senator Mark Pody, who stands against LGBTQ+ rights and sponsors misinformation about the 2020 presidential election.

Until last night, President Boyd intended to financially sponsor Senator Pody's political fundraiser while also planning to attend. Despite his claims that he was not the "host" for the event, these actions are, in fact, the duties of a host.

While he has since withdrawn this financial support for the event because of media pressure, the damage has been done. Senator Pody's reprehensible personal and legislative history should have alone been enough to keep President Boyd from offering to fund this event. His backpedaling, while recognized, appears disingenuous.

President Boyd's actions come into direct conflict with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Strategic Vision to "develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength." While university leadership claims to work towards goals like this one, President Boyd's planned financial support for Senator Pody's fundraiser sponsors a political vision in direct opposition to declared university priorities.

Our university has a history of being ranked as one of the most unfriendly to the LGBTQ+ community in the nation. While this fundraiser marks the latest disappointment LGBTQ+ students must endure from administration, there is a culture that resides at our institution which allows homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of violence to flourish without repercussions. The university administration's actions need to be congruent with their expressed vision to make our campus one where *Vol Means All*.

President Boyd, you must work harder to uphold the previously stated values of the University of Tennessee by:

- **Donating the money that was intended to finance the breakfast to the UT Pride Center**
- **Hosting a Town Hall Meeting to hear the concerns of the Student Body**
- **Supporting student calls for change in regards to LGBTQ+ issues**

Sincerely,

Claire Donelan, Student Body President, and Student Government Association Executive Cabinet

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.