

## 10 Against Ordinance

Dear Russ,

I urge you to support a postponement of the housing ordinance vote that is scheduled for tomorrow.

My family and I live at 2224 Dayton and have seen and heard, in the 21 years we've lived in this house, much evidence of the problems that student rentals bring, (the noise, the trash, the garbage, the extra traffic, etc.) We are more than tired of it. Yes we have seen more responsiveness on the part of St. Thomas, in connecting us with landlords, for example, but the problems remain. The solution to the problem would be for St. Thomas to not allow so many undergraduates to live off campus, and instead to create enough living spaces to accommodate them on campus. According to Doug Hennes of St. Thomas, in his editorial in the latest issue of the Villager, that is not going to happen. In this same editorial, Mr. Hennes claimed that the ordinance should extend beyond the initially proposed boundaries and include other areas of St. Paul, so that St. Thomas should not be singled out.

Now I have learned, from my daughter who attends Macalester, that somehow the boundaries of the ordinance *have* been extended, to include the area between Fairview and Snelling and south to St. Clair, the prime rental area for Macalester students. A much larger percentage of Macalester's student body comes from outside Minnesota, than does St. Thomas's. The vast majority of them (92%) do not have cars, but rely on bikes, buses, or their feet to get around. The ordinance would force many of them to find off-campus housing farther from the school.

In the St. Thomas area, the ordinance *might* halt the student rental problem from spreading, but it still won't turn clueless, disrespectful students into model adults, nor will it force absent landlords to get involved in problem renters and properties (which would be a much better solution than the housing ordinance.)The ordinance was created because of the St. Thomas neighborhood problem, was it not? For the reasons mentioned above, the same ordinance would not work so well in the Macalester neighborhood. Therefore, I believe that it should not be brought to a vote tomorrow until something can be drafted that is fair for all parties and recognizes that the problems experienced by the homeowners in the St. Thomas neighborhood are unique, and that the wording of the present proposal would unduly hurt Macalester students who live off campus.

Sincerely,

Maggie Wirth-Johnson  
2224 Dayton Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104

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Dear Councilman Stark,

My name is Analiese Sigelko. I am a student of Macalester College and I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

It is my understanding that the ordinance would disproportionately affect Macalester students by increasing competition for off-campus housing, driving up rent and forcing students to search further afield for off-campus options. As only 8% of Macalester students own cars, it is vital that we retain full ability to live near campus.

Moreover, it seems that the ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.). While, as a student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law.

Finally, I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards,

Analiese Sigelko

Macalester College, Class of 2014

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Dear Councilman Stark,

My name is Agata Mischczyk, and I am a student at Macalester College. I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

An ordinance such as this would put a huge strain on Macalester students, by making off-campus housing less readily available. Macalester College does not have a lot of on-campus housing options for upperclassmen and many students decide to live off campus. This ordinance would increase competition in off-campus renting, drive up prices, and force students to move further and further away from campus.

Secondly, this ordinance will not fix the issue at hand, it will just push the issue into a different neighborhood. It seems that this ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.) encountered while living in near proximity to three colleges. While, as a

student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law. I currently live off-campus in the area included in the ordinance. I have been here for two years and have enjoyed living off-campus and want other students to have the same opportunity to do so.

I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday.

Thank you.

Regards,

Agata Miszczyk  
Class of 2013

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Dear Councilmember—

My name is Leewana Thomas, a student of Macalester College, and I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

It is my understanding that the ordinance would disproportionately affect Macalester students by increasing competition for off-campus housing, driving up rent and forcing students to search further afield for off-campus options. As only 8% of Macalester students own cars, it is vital that we retain full ability to live near campus.

Moreover, it seems that the ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.). While, as a student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law.

Finally, I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation. As an American Studies major and someone who takes full advantage of internships, volunteering, events, and networking I can

personally attest to the benefits of using the Twin Cities as an extension of our classroom. When students live on-campus they are less likely to venture out into the community.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards,

Leewana Thomas

American Studies, Educational Studies, and Anthropology

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Councilman Stark,

My name is Nathanael Smith, I graduated from Macalester this May. I'm writing to express my opposition to the student-housing ordinance you will be voting on tomorrow.

As a former Macalester Student, I understand that college rentals in the area cause problems. However, all of those problems are addressed by current city ordinances. Social Host laws deal with large and loud parties. Trespassing laws forbid students from cutting across properties. This proposal is over-broad as it is not sufficiently framed to address the problems associated with student housing.

Additionally, the ordinance will result in many harms, including:

- It will increase the competition for off campus housing. Macalester requires students to live on campus for two years, but has limited on campus housing for a students Junior and Senior year. Few housing options means higher housing cost. In a time of exploding education costs, we cannot bear additional costs.
- Spreading out Student housing will not stop parties. In fact, it will just increase the distance students walk between parties. More litter, noise, and trespassing will result from this ordinance.
- Sends a bad message to students. Macalester is an exceptional institution that attracts students from around the world. Passing this ordinance sends us a clear message that we are an unwelcome part of the community.

The benefits are nonexistent, and the costs are huge.

I'll be taking time off of work tomorrow to observe your vote. Do the right thing.

Regards,

Nathanael Smith  
Macalester Class of 2012

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Dear Councilman Stark,

My name is Charlotte, a student of Macalester College, and I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

It is my understanding that the ordinance would disproportionately affect Macalester students by increasing competition for off-campus housing, driving up rent and forcing students to search further afield for off-campus options. As only 8% of Macalester students own cars, it is vital that we retain full ability to live near campus.

Moreover, it seems that the ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.). While, as a student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law.

Finally, I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards,

Charlotte Bernsohn

Macalester College, Class of 2013

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Dear Councilman Stark,

My name is Imogen Pursch, a student of Macalester College, and I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

It is my understanding that the ordinance would disproportionately affect Macalester students by increasing competition for off-campus housing, driving up rent and forcing students to search further afield for off-campus options. As only 8% of Macalester students own cars, it is vital that we retain full ability to live near campus.

Moreover, it seems that the ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.). While, as a student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law.

Finally, I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards,

Imogen Anne Pursch

Macalester College, Class of 2013

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Dear Councilman,

My name is Ben Tittle, a student of Macalester College, and I am writing to express my full opposition to the student-housing ordinance (Ordinance 12-34 [Version 3]) coming to a vote on June 27, 2012.

It is my understanding that the ordinance would disproportionately affect Macalester students by increasing competition for off-campus housing, driving up rent and forcing students to search further afield for off-campus options. As only 8% of Macalester students own cars, it is vital that we retain full ability to live near campus.

Moreover, it seems that the ordinance does little to address nuisances (noise, etc.). While, as a student of Macalester College, I acknowledge that these issues exist, they are much more aptly addressed by city actions such as the current Social Host law.

Finally, I submit that living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience for students and the Twin Cities alike. It fosters a strong connection between students and their neighborhoods, making them much more likely to decide to keep their motivated, skilled labor in the Twin Cities post-graduation.

For these reasons, please vote against the student-housing ordinance on Wednesday. Thank you.

Regards,

Benjamin Tittle

Macalester College, Class of 2015

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Dear Councilman Stark,

I am writing to each member of the council to express my strong opposition to the proposed Ordinance 12-34 (Version 3) which expands the current city ordinance that caps and places new restrictions upon 'student housing' in the University of St. Thomas neighborhood. This will be voted on today. The expansion into the area bounded by Fairview Ave, I-94, Snelling Ave, and Summit Ave will (1) almost exclusively hurt students of Macalester College, (2) not address the problems—real and imagined—that exist with student housing, (3) and have unintended consequences beyond simple neighborly relations. As a student of Macalester College, a Minnesota voter, and a resident of the Merriam Park neighborhood, I oppose this ordinance for these reasons.

(1) There can be no mistake that the new proposal is targeted at Macalester College. The immediate UST neighborhood is already covered by these new rules and restrictions. The expansion area is the area to the immediate north of Macalester College only, and it is farther from UST than Macalester. This is even though the problems purported to be addressed by the ordinance exclusively stem from the growing student body of UST. While Macalester's student body has not grown from around 2,000 students in decades, UST's total student body now numbers over 10,000, a substantial recent increase. It is this ballooning of the UST population that has caused the stresses in student housing that have led to these ordinances, yet the latest ordinance targets an area only secondary to UST's housing demand, yet primary to that of Macalester.

Compared to UST students, however, Macalester students have much less of an ability to simply move elsewhere. Macalester's student body is significantly less local than UST's, with nearly 20% of the student body having citizenship in another country, and less than a quarter coming from Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Iowa. In part because of this more diverse student body, only 8% of Macalester students have cars, while 40% of UST students do. As more Macalester students come from out of state, and more (60%) study abroad, they also have less opportunities to search for housing. These factors severely limit the ability of Macalester students to find housing opportunities outside of the neighborhoods immediately surrounding Macalester, while UST's student body has significantly more mobility, time, and thus; options. By limiting the places that students can live in area north of Macalester, this ordinance will force Macalester students into a disadvantageous competition with UST students, and close off the pressure valve.

(2) Few of the problems with student housing are addressed by these ordinances. The issues with neighborly strife are not exclusive to students, nor are they caused by all students. On the second page of the ordinance, students are blamed without restraint for a number of issues:

WHEREAS, "permanent" residents from neighborhoods surrounding UST have expressed concern about



problems associated with high concentrations of student occupied housing in established neighborhoods and, in particular, that concentrations of student occupied housing within an established neighborhood will, by the transient nature of student housing occupancies, operations, and use, disrupt the intent and purpose of the zoning code's one- and two-family zoning classifications for these established neighborhoods by overcrowding, excessive vehicular traffic, demand for available parking, noise, and other nuisance conditions, in contrast to other low density one- and two-family zoning districts which are not impacted by concentrations of student occupied rental housing;

However, aside from noting the 'concern' from longer-term residents, there is no indication in the text of the ordinance that any of these claims had been previously investigated. Indeed, the subsequent paragraphs indicate that on the basis of complaints alone, this council directed the Planning Commission to conduct a study of the designated area. It is my understanding that the Planning Commission in fact does not support the proposed ordinance, calling into question why this course of action is being pursued at all. If the word 'student' were replaced with 'immigrant' or 'youth' the ordinance would likely be thrown out of the council on sight.

It's impossible to deny that students are the cause of some neighborhood issues. However, these issues are already addressed by existing laws, and would not be additionally addressed by this expansion of the ordinance. Fire regulations already in place limit the number of occupants in student housing. Additionally, as 8% of Macalester students own cars; the idea that student housing leads to "excessive vehicular traffic" or restricts "available parking" is quite obviously embellished. Students are less likely to own a car, and more likely to use public transportation, bikes, or their feet than neighborhood families.

Upkeep of the property; as mentioned earlier in the ordinance is not only the responsibility of students—although I know of no student who trashes their own home—but rather the owners of the house; who surely have an incentive to keep up the property in order to maintain its worth to renters and eventual buyers. While noise complaints are the least easy nuisance to deny, existing social host laws already punish student parties to a degree that many students consider outright prohibitive.

The list of plagues brought upon neighborhoods by student populations, whether from UST or Macalester is unfair to students. And again, the proposed ordinance would not do anything to combat these issues when they exist, while other existing laws already do. The supply of student housing would not be decreased in the near term, only in the long term, and never fully eliminated. This ordinance hurts students in five, ten, or twenty years. Instead, additional UST students, or displaced future Macalester students would have to seek housing in other neighborhoods farther afield, where their primary effect will probably be... increased vehicular traffic.

(3) Why should a Macalester senior care about a restriction in student housing that will barely affect him? It is in part because living off-campus is an incredibly valuable experience, to the student, the college, and also the city. The student learns increased responsibility, gains more freedom, and is able to better adapt their living situation. The

high cost of college goes down without the fee for room and board. Meanwhile, the college does not need to provide housing to that student, easing existing supplies for current underclassmen, and reducing costs for the college itself. Finally, the city gains something more intangible, but certainly a benefit that should be strongly considered in the conversation of this law. One of the economic strengths of the Twin Cities is the large number of private and public colleges within their boundaries. From these schools, including Macalester, come a number of educated and motivated young people, determined to work and make a difference in the Twin Cities community. This benefits the region as a whole, providing the city with a strong labor pool for knowledge industries, a constant real-estate demand, and a firewall against declines in manufacturing which have damaged the prospects of other midwestern cities. I can say that living off-campus has led me to explore and enjoy much more of the Twin Cities than I had in my previous two years at school, given me a new attachment to the area and it has increased the chances that I, a native of New York City, would choose to live and work in the Twin Cities after graduation. I cannot speak for my peers, but I believe that this is the case for many other students. The economic benefits of a heavy student body living off campus, physically and emotionally invested in neighborhoods outside of campus, and with increased appreciation for the place in which they live and study, are greater than I believe the council has considered. Young, educated people are a critical part of the future of the Twin Cities; and should not be slighted, ignored, or made to feel so unwelcome.

I hope that you have received many emails from my fellow students opposing this ordinance, and I believe that your colleague, Councilman Tolbert has expressed his opposition to the measure, in part because of student feedback. I urge you to join him in opposition the ordinance, and at the very least postponing the decision until students from Macalester can be active participants in the neighborhood process during the fall semester.

Thank you for reading,  
Alex Schieferdecker  
Macalester Class of 2013

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Mr. Russ Stark-

Hello my name is Brett Levenson and I will be a senior next year at the University of St. Thomas. I am studying psychology there and have had an excellent experience doing it. I am grateful for St. Thomas and the superior area surrounding the University, it has brought me great memories that I'll cherish for the remainder of my existence. I have lived in four different places these past four years so I have gotten familiar in a variety of neighborhoods in the St. Thomas area [ranging from a block away to a mile away from campus]. Although my time that has been spend at the University of St. Thomas and St. Paul area has cultivated growth as a student and a citizen, I cannot imagine it ever being the same if this student housing ordinance passes.

Yes, I am a college student that takes part in college student activities. Whether that be on the weekends or random nights of the week, I enjoy being with my friends and having a good time. Don't assume that "having a good time" is operationally defined as heavily drinking, because it is not. I look at it as being with the people I care about and doing whatever we think is right at that given moment. This could be watching the big game, having a bon fire or creating giant forts in our houses. On the contrary, I do not vandalize, I do not steal and I do not disrupt the community surrounding the St. Thomas area. Getting punished for doing everything right simply doesn't seem right. Furthermore, even if I was an individual who did those 'do nots', I don't believe this ordinance would solve the problem; instead, I see it as spreading out the problem. I can understand families and the community's uproar about this on going problem, however, I don't believe this will be the proper solution. Kids will still be roaming the streets to and from friends places, bars and campus. Limiting them and their living situations will only make students roam around more. This is all true, that is, if those students would be able to find places to live in upon getting kicked out of their current residence.

I understand I look rather bias with my opposition towards this ordinance, because quite frankly, I am. I'm a student that lives in the community who would be greatly affected if it is passed. I would like to ask for a favor Mr. Stark and look at me and my situation. Would you like to be kicked out of your house summer before senior year? I am living in St. Paul now while working two jobs and doing research for the psych department on campus. I would have no options and a tarnished final year at UST. So I beg of you, please vote against this ordinance so I can have a place to lay my head at night. I'm aware that you introduced this ordinance, but I still believe this is not the most effective and efficient solution. Thank you very much for your time.

Signed,

Brett Levenson

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