# University of Illinois Greek Alumni:  CALL TO ACTION

# We need your help ASAP - by Friday May 18, 2018 (Or Earlier)

# Please read the important information below and

# help us with our CALL TO ACTION!

# Background -- Skyrocketing Champaign County Real Estate Property Taxes on Sororities and Fraternities Are Raising the Cost of College to our Undergraduate Members and Are Threatening the Very Existence of Our Greek System at the University of Illinois

Our sororities and fraternities are non-profit, university-approved organizations which seek to provide fraternal housing at a low price, controlling the cost of college education for our members. Real estate property taxes levied by Champaign County are a significant and increasing component of our Chapter House operations. Starting in 2017, Champaign County implemented a massive tax increase targeted in *the* *University of Illinois campus town area* threatening the viability of all sororities and fraternities located there. The average tax increase is 77% costing campus town sororities and fraternities on average $1,114 to $2,632 per student per year. As just one example, Phi Kappa Psi’s real estate property taxes have skyrocketed to $72,972 due in 2018 from $19,432 due in 2016, a 373% increase. This tax increase dramatically increases the cost of college for our sorority and fraternity members because we have to increase rent to pay the tax. We hear that Urbana is about to get a real estate property tax increase. *This is a life-threatening issue for our Greek System as these excessive costs now loom over our financial viability and our missions to provide affordable housing for our members.*

Champaign County decision makers have targeted campus town because they know that that the campus town students don’t vote in Champaign and that this is the path of least resistance to raise money to pay for a new elementary school bond issue, and county pension and legacy costs. Local school construction and local K-12 education have nothing to do with university students or our members who, obviously, do not use these schools. <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-04-12/coming-property-tax-bills-include-first-bump-champaign-schools.html>

# University of Illinois Dormitories Are Exempt from Real Estate Property Taxation

Under Illinois law, University of Illinois dormitories, as well as most university owned properties like stadiums, dining halls, and student exercise facilities, are exempt from payment of real estate property taxes. 35 ILCS 200/15-35. Our non-profit sororities and fraternities are heavily regulated by the University of Illinois and Champaign County. There is no logical reason to treat our organizations differently than a dormitory owned by the University for purposes of real estate property taxation. Indeed, Indiana law exempts sororities and fraternities from payment of real estate property taxes. See Indiana Code § 6.1.1-10-24.

# Our Solution – Real Estate Property Tax Exemption for Nonprofit, School-Approved Sororities, Fraternities, and Other Organizations

Your University of Illinois Greek Alumni Corporation Board Association (GACBA) is made up of Alumni Fraternity and Sorority Directors and we are leading the effort to pass an Illinois law to exempt fraternities, sororities and other nonprofit, school-approved organizations from real estate property taxation **for the express purpose of reducing the cost of college to our members and their families**.

Following are key action steps GACBA has been taking to get real estate property tax relief and to control college costs for our members:

* GACBA created the legislative concept and framework for **HB4914** and Kirkland & Ellis graciously vetted **HB4914** for legality.
* GACBA created the accompanying information sheet on **HB 4914** which we are asking you to share with State Representatives and Senators.
* GACBA has been working with Illinois State Representative, UIUC alumnus, and Alpha Gamma Rho member Bob Pritchard to enact **HB4914** into Illinois law. Bob has been working tirelessly for this cause. Bob sponsored House Bill **HB 4914** which was referred to the House Revenue and Finance Committee in Springfield.
* On April 19, 2018 GACBA members testified in support of **HB 4914** before the Illinois House Revenue and Finance Committee in Springfield and urged committee Chairman Michael J. Zalewski (D. Riverside) and his fellow committee members to enact **HB4914.**
* Also on April 19, 2018 GACBA met with Champaign Mayor Deborah Feinen and newly-elected City of Champaign Township Assessor Paul Faraci alerting them to our problem and seeking local property tax relief.
* GACBA has been building consensus among University of Illinois leadership, including **University of Illinois President Timothy Killeen,** Chairman of the **University of Illinois Board of Trustees Tim Koritz,** and many other University of Illinois leaders. **We have our University’s support**.

As a result of this effort, the relief sought in **HB4914** is now under consideration by the Illinois House for inclusion in a separate, but larger, “omnibus” bill during the 2018 legislative session.

# CALL TO ACTION - URGENT NEED FOR YOUR HELP

We need 100,000 Greek alumni to politely, but firmly, urge their State Representative and Senator to incorporate the relief sought in **HB 4914** into an omnibus bill which will be considered during the 2018 legislative term in Springfield.Enactment of therelief we seek will control the cost of college for our members and their families byextending 35 ILCS 200/15-35 to provide the same real estate property tax exemption to school-approved, nonprofit housing operated by sororities, fraternities, and other school-approved student organizations as is currently given to university-owned housing.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP! We need you to take the following action steps no later than Wednesday May 16, 2018:

1. We want you to send three emails, call your State Representative and Senator, get other Greek alumni involved in this lobbying effort, and stay current with GACBA’s efforts to enact relief as in **HB4914**.
2. The first email should be sent to **House Revenue and Finance Committee Chairman Michael J. Zalewski (D Riverside, IL)** and **Members of the House Revenue and Finance Committee** respectfully asking them to support controlling costs for college students living in non-profit, university-approved student housing as proposed in **HB4914. *Our ask is that the relief sought in HB4914 be included as part of an omnibus bill addressing Illinois real estate property tax issues and that this be done during the 2018 Legislative Session.*** 
   1. **Chairman Zalewski is a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign alumnus** and is a member of the University of Illinois Caucus. Chairman Zalewski is a strong supporter of the University of Illinois. He was not in a fraternity but was very gracious and receptive to our April 19, 2018 testimony. Chairman Zalewski is influential with other leaders in the Illinois General Assembly so Rep. Zalewski’s support is critical.
   2. We have created the accompanying form email prepopulated with the email addresses for Representative Zalewski and **the other ten Members of the House Revenue and Finance Committee**. A file with bios on the Revenue and Finance Committee Members is attached. Please forward this email under your name.Feel free to customize the email message but in a respectful manner, of course.
3. Send a **second email** to State Representatives and Senators who are members of the **University of Illinois Caucus**. Simply re-use the same form email re-addressed to “Dear Member of the University of Illinois Caucus:”. A file with bios on the University of Illinois Caucus Members is attached. Caucus members are directly involved in issues impacting the University of Illinois and its students and are powerful voices in our General Assembly. Attached is an information sheet listing the members of the University of Illinois Caucus. Email addresses are also provided.
4. Send **a third email** specifically to your State Representative and Senator.You can re-use the form email.  **Find your House and Senate Districts and your Representative/Senator here:**  <http://www.elections.il.gov/districtlocator/addressfinder.aspx>
5. Call **Chairman Zalewski at 217/782-5820 or 708/442-6500** and call your own State Representative and Senator and respectfully ask them to support controlling costs for college students living in non-profit, university-approved student housing as proposed in **HB4914.**
6. Sign our online petition at change.org. The link is here: <https://www.change.org/p/illinois-state-house-support-house-bill-4914-the-college-cost-control-act-to-reduce-college-costs-for-illinois-students-residing-in-non-profit-university-approved-housing-facilities?recruiter=875196594&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition>
7. Visit and “like” our Facebook page linked here <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ControlCollegeCostsinIllinois/posts/?ref=page_internal> and tell your friends to do the same. Example real estate property tax bills will be posted on that page to illustrate the severity of the tax increase on our students, their families and our non-profit organizations.
8. Do you know any Illinois State Representative or Senator and can you contact that person on our behalf? Please let us know if you have any relationships that can help.
9. Forward this email, the form email, and the attachments to your entire alumni base. We need 100,000 Greek Alumni contacts to the Illinois General Assembly members to make this happen.
10. Participate in GACBA calls and updates to stay current on this important effort which is crucial to the viability of our Greek system. Email Chris Disher to get on our GACBA mailing list.
11. Send any questions to the GACBA leadership listed below. Our contact information is below.

Thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

The Greek Alumni Corporation Board Association

GACBA Leaders for Questions Are:

Chris Disher - President, Greek Alumni Corporation Board Association and President, Alpha Kappa Lambda Board of Directors, [disherchris@mac.com](mailto:disherchris@mac.com) , 847/226-3917

John Munger – President, Phi Kappa Psi Board of Directors, [jmunger@janlaw.com](mailto:jmunger@janlaw.com) , 847/922-5999

Kevin Baldwin – Theta Chi, [kbaldwin@daleymohan.com](mailto:kbaldwin@daleymohan.com), 773/ 562-5213

Robin Mauro – Sigma Kappa, [rmauro27@att.net](mailto:rmauro27@att.net), 630/ 841-8841

Kevin McDonnell - Pi Kappa Alpha, [k.mcdonnell@comcast.net](mailto:k.mcdonnell@comcast.net), 312/718-3239

Matt Wilson - Delta Tau Delta, [mjw1@uillinois.edu](mailto:mjw1@uillinois.edu), 217/ 369-3006

# Form Email – Greek Alumnus, Please Copy and Paste This Text and Email it Under Your Name Separately to Each of the Two Groups of Legislators. Legislator Email Addresses are Below.

# Subject: College Cost Control Act – House Bill 4914 – Please Support This Legislation

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [Salutation is either: Chairman Zalewski and Members of the House Revenue and Finance Committee ***or*** Member of the University of Illinois Caucus]:

We need to control the high cost of college for our Illinois students and their families, a major and increasing part of which is student housing. This session, **House Bill 4914** (sponsored by Robert Pritchard) was introduced to reduce the cost of student housing for any student living in non-profit, university-approved, privately-owned student housing. **HB 4914** accomplishes this important result by extending the real estate property tax exemption afforded university-owned dormitories under 35 ILCS 200/15-35 to these qualifying non-profit organizations. I respectfully ask that the relief sought in **HB 4914** be incorporated into an appropriate piece of legislation so that it can be voted on by the entire Illinois House during the 2018 legislative session.

I am an alumnus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was a member of **[insert name of your fraternity/sorority here]** while in college. Non-profit, university-approved, private housing provided by sororities, fraternities, and other organizations plays an important role in controlling the cost of college education by providing affordable and high-quality housing to members, typically at a lower cost than university dormitories. These worthy organizations, which provide leadership, personal-growth, and philanthropic opportunities, and helped develop me into the person I am today, should be afforded the same status as university-owned dormitories for purposes of real estate property taxation. Your support of the relief sought in **HB4914** is needed to keep college affordable for our Illinois students and their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your contact information

The email addresses for the House Revenue and Finance Committee Members are below. Copy and paste them into your email.

[mike@repmikezalewski.org](mailto:mike@repmikezalewski.org), [arthurt@ilga.gov](mailto:arthurt@ilga.gov), [repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com](mailto:repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com), [stewart@ilhousegop.org](mailto:stewart@ilhousegop.org), [mcsweeney@ilhousegop.org](mailto:mcsweeney@ilhousegop.org), [repmartwick@gmail.com](mailto:repmartwick@gmail.com), [repevans33@gmail.com](mailto:repevans33@gmail.com), [repharris@yahoo.com](mailto:repharris@yahoo.com), [repsosnowski@gmail.com](mailto:repsosnowski@gmail.com), [robertbobrita@aol.com](mailto:robertbobrita@aol.com), [repcurrie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:repcurrie@sbcglobal.net);

The email addresses for the University of Illinois Caucus Members are below. Copy and paste them into your email.

[michelle@staterepcarolammons.com](mailto:michelle@staterepcarolammons.com); [debk.repbatinick@gmail.com](mailto:debk.repbatinick@gmail.com); [bennett@ilhousegop.org](mailto:bennett@ilhousegop.org); [jfranklin@hds.ilga.gov](mailto:jfranklin@hds.ilga.gov), [kburke@kellyburkerep36.org](mailto:kburke@kellyburkerep36.org); [staterepcostello@gmail.com](mailto:staterepcostello@gmail.com); [state.repflowers@comcast.net](mailto:state.repflowers@comcast.net); [robyn@robyngabel.com](mailto:robyn@robyngabel.com); [repjgordon@gmail.com](mailto:repjgordon@gmail.com); [rephalpin@gmail.com](mailto:rephalpin@gmail.com); [chad@rephays.com](mailto:chad@rephays.com); [repfranhurley@gmail.com](mailto:repfranhurley@gmail.com); [repjeanneives@gmail.com](mailto:repjeanneives@gmail.com); [langli@ilga.gov](mailto:langli@ilga.gov); [McCombie@ilhousegop.gov](mailto:McCombie@ilhousegop.gov); [staterepmoeller@gmail.com](mailto:staterepmoeller@gmail.com); [staterepmoylan@gmail.com](mailto:staterepmoylan@gmail.com); [olsen@ilhousegop.org](mailto:olsen@ilhousegop.org); [parkhurst@ilhousegop.org](mailto:parkhurst@ilhousegop.org); [bob@pritchardstaterep.com](mailto:bob@pritchardstaterep.com); [keith@davidreis.org](mailto:keith@davidreis.org); [rep.riley38@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rep.riley38@sbcglobal.net); [sauer@ilhousegop.gov](mailto:sauer@ilhousegop.gov); [4repsoto@gmail.com](mailto:4repsoto@gmail.com); [Ryan.Spain@gmail.com](mailto:Ryan.Spain@gmail.com); [repryanspain@gmail.com](mailto:repryanspain@gmail.com); [repstratton5@gmail.com](mailto:repstratton5@gmail.com); [office@repkeithwheeler.org](mailto:office@repkeithwheeler.org); [repwillis77@gmail.com](mailto:repwillis77@gmail.com); [sjimenez@ilhousegop.org](mailto:sjimenez@ilhousegop.org); [mike@repmikezalewski.org](mailto:mike@repmikezalewski.org);