

### **The Union Notes:**

That freedom of speech/freedom of expression is an internationally-recognised human right, as observed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>2</sup>,

That the independent organisation Spiked Magazine has issued to the University of Lincoln Students' Union a "Red" rating for freedom of speech/expression, indicating that the Union "creates an environment that is hostile to free speech"<sup>3</sup>,

That freedom of expression is protected in UK Law under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998, with the associated responsibilities included<sup>4</sup>,

### **The Union Believes:**

That the decision to suspend the Conservative Society's social media accounts was misguided and an unacceptable breach of freedom of expression, and that the lifting of the suspension is positive,

That, although the Spiked Magazine report's condemnation of the bans on Initiations, hate speech and the platform Yik Yak misses the aim of those policies, the report does highlight a severe difficulty in the Union's capacity to engage in dialogue with our members,

That the External Speaker's Policy has stifled the ability of Societies and Sports Teams to operate effectively,

That a review of policy on free speech must take place immediately,

### **The Union Resolves:**

That the Union shall formally apologise to the Conservative Society for the impact that the suspension of their social media accounts has had on their capacity to operate,

That the Disciplinary Panel should not impose bans on Societies and Sports Teams using Social Media unless and until this is included in their powers under the Disciplinary Procedures,

That dissent towards Union or University policy either written or verbal should not alone constitute "bringing the Union into disrepute", provided that dissent is primarily critical of the policy and free from racist, homophobic, sexist, ableist or transphobic abuse, be it from an elected officer, trustee, or ordinary member of the Union,

That the External Speaker's Policy be put under review immediately in order to amend the policy in order to alleviate the impact the policy has on Societies and Sports Teams,

That no other SU procedure, policy or code of conduct should be interpreted in such a way as to prohibit societies, individuals or officers from expressing their disagreement with union policy or actions, subject to the above conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.spiked-online.com/free-speech-university-rankings/profile/lincoln#.WMHCsvmLTIU>

<sup>4</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/946400.stm#expression>

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