Petition for an Advisory Opinion was brought by Elizabeth Hawthorne concerning the ability of a Chartered Student Organization to support a candidate running for election for a seat in the Student Government of Texas State University.

The primary question before the Election Board was for guidance as to whether or not her sorority could support her in any capacity.
Advisory Opinion

In relation to this request, the Election Board had to first determine whether or not a sorority or fraternity is considered as a Chartered Student Organization (CSO). Found in the Student Organizations Handbook is a brief definition of what a CSO is. The Handbook states that CSO’s are organizations which serve to coordinate programs or services, or they can serve as umbrella organizations for a large number of constituencies and are recognized as a department or entity of Texas State University.

Further, the Student Organizations Handbook states that social Greek-lettered organizations are organized under one of four governing councils: 1) Interfraternity Council (IFC), 2) Multicultural Greek Council (MGC), 3) National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), or 4) Panhellenic Council (PC). According to the Student Organizations Handbook, the above listed councils are considered to be Chartered Greek Governing Councils at Texas State University.

Because of this, it is the opinion of this Election Board that a sorority or fraternity which is associated with any Chartered Greek Governing Council, the IFC, MGC, NPHC, or PC, will be understood to be a CSO. This is because the above mentioned councils are considered to serve as an umbrella organization for its constituencies, either sororities, fraternities, or both. Therefore, Greek-lettered organizations are considered to be a CSO as they are an extension of the Chartered Greek Governing Council they are organized under.

Regarding whether or not a sorority or fraternity can support a candidate running for election, it is the opinion of this Election Board that if said sorority or fraternity associated with any Chartered Greek Governing Council, then that sorority of fraternity cannot support a candidate running for office. If a sorority or fraternity were to support a candidate, it would be in direct violation of S.G.C.. III. §105.2(15) which states that CSO’s may not provide support of any candidate. In addition, a CSO may not endorse any candidate as S.G.C.. III. §100.4(2) refers to “endorsing” or “endorsement” of a candidate as any form of communication expressing support for a candidate.

However, it must be stated that although a sorority or fraternity associated with a Chartered Greek Governing Council may not in its entirety, or as a whole, support any candidate, that does not
mean that any individual(s) of the organization cannot support any candidate.

It is the opinion of this Election Board that an individual or individuals of a sorority or fraternity associated with a Chartered Greek Governing Council may support a candidate under two conditions: 1) the individual(s) of the organization must be listed as workers or agents under the candidate’s campaign and that list must be filed with the Election Board; and 2) the individual(s) of the organization must show no affiliation with the organization, this means that no individual can display the Greek letters of the organization on their person, campaign material, or within their general vicinity.

*It is so ordered*