

HANOVER INSTITUTE

The following letter was sent to *The Dartmouth* but never published.

The Hanover Institute is therefore placing this ad so that the Dartmouth community will not be misinformed.

To the Editor:

On January 8, an article appeared in the *The Dartmouth* entitled, “Alumni Org. Suspected of Funding in Lawsuit”. The lawsuit in question, of course, is the recent suit brought by a group of individual alumni seeking to enforce the 1891 agreement between the College and its alumni with respect to equality of alumni representation on the Board of Trustees. Alumni Council President John Daukas is stated in the article as having said that “he would not be surprised if the Institute were funding the suit without making its actions public”. That “suspicion” is what presumably makes this article newsworthy.

I find it rather comical to see *The Dartmouth* and Alumni Council President Daukas, like Watson and Holmes with magnifying glasses and white gloves, looking for the Hanover Institute’s finger-prints on the lawsuit when the Institute has been so open and so public about our support for the right of alumni to select one-half the board of trustees and our support for the only option remaining with potential to compel the trustees to abide by the 1891 agreement: the current lawsuit.

Indeed, the Hanover Institute has sent emails and letters in the tens of thousands to Dartmouth alumni expressing our view that the lawsuit is the only tool that might compel the trustees to rescind their September 2007 resolution purporting to abrogate the 1891 agreement. These same communications have solicited funds so that this purpose might be accomplished. The Hanover Institute has made no secret of its willingness to fund this lawsuit.

Can it really be that John Daukas is ignorant of so massive an effort to alert alumni and provide a conduit for their contribution to a legal effort to preserve rights they have enjoyed for 116 years? Or is his supposed suspicion merely a pretence, designed for another purpose? Perhaps he be-

lieves adding mystery to the mix helps create a story when there really isn’t one. Or is he just trying to peel back the onion to find out exactly which alumni have contributed to this effort so that pressure can be brought on them? This is vintage Daukas.

Our opponents have repeatedly tried to incite “suspicion” as a means of pressing the Hanover Institute to disclose the names of its contributors. Not only do we have no obligation for such disclosure but—like the American Civil Liberties Union, the Sierra Club, and other entities that engage in public interest litigation—we have a duty to protect the privacy of donors. The nature of our mailings and the audience to which they are addressed speak for themselves. The Hanover Institute consists of Dartmouth alumni, uniting to strengthen the role of alumni in the conduct of their College’s affairs.

For the record, let me state again that the Hanover Institute supports the current lawsuit because its members treasure the unique historical relationship to the College afforded by the 1891 Agreement and we believe it has been very good for Dartmouth. Moreover, we believe that Agreement was a binding contract, and that the board of trustees has wrongfully and unilaterally acted for the purpose of voiding that contract and placing complete control in the hands of a self-perpetuating body answerable only to itself. We have raised and will continue to raise money, mostly from Dartmouth alumni, to pay for this legal battle provoked not by the alumni but by a majority of the board of trustees, acting to reduce the alumni voice on the board to a permanent, impotent, and token minority. The board has left us no choice.

John MacGovern ’80, President
Hanover Institute