Student Senate Resolution 2015-1043

TITLE: Student Body Resolution Supporting the Revision and Removal of Discriminatory State Holidays

AUTHOR(S): Senator Max Klein, Senator Kayla Malone


WHEREAS, the University of Florida honors the Emanuel Nine as public servants who committed their lives towards advocating for social justice, ending State endorsement of discriminatory symbols and educating their communities; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida supports the cause of the Emanuel Nine and the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church to take action towards equality by “actively promoting equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination” as mandated by the UF Non-Discrimination Policy1 and required by the Student Honor Code2; and,

WHEREAS, the United States of America has come together through the Emanuel Nine tragedy “with a thoughtful introspection and self-examination of societal inequality that we so rarely see in public life”3; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Florida discontinued use of the Confederate Battle Flag on the state capitol in 2001 and must continue to lead southern states in making strides towards ending state discrimination; and,

WHEREAS, Chapter 683.01, Florida Statutes lists “Birthday of Jefferson Davis, June 3” and “Birthday of Robert E. Lee, January 19” as legal holidays4; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, and Robert E. Lee, Commanding General of the Confederate States of America, extended the longevity of American slavery and symbolize an oppressive era by fighting for the cause of the Confederacy5; and,

WHEREAS, State endorsement of the aforementioned historical figures originated to oppose post-Civil War integration and sharply diverges from our modern day ideals of peace, harmony, and freedom among all groups6; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges the University community to support the removal of the Birthday’s of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee from the Chapter 683.01, Florida Statutes; and,

4 http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0600-0699/0683/Sections/0683.01.html
6 http://www.academia.edu/6103939/Holidays_for_Heroes_of_the_Lost_Cause_Lee_Jackson_and_Davis
THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate implores the university community to uphold the UF non-discrimination policy and continue to work to diligently promote equality and justice for all peoples.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution will be sent to University of Florida President Kent W. Fuchs, University of Florida Office of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, Florida Student Association (FSA), Executive Office of the Governor Rick Scott, Florida Senate Committee on Government Oversight & Accountability, Florida Board of Governors, Gainesville City Commission, Alachua County Commission, Alachua County Branch of the NAACP, and the Kirby Smith Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.