

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2018-1019

TITLE: Student Body Resolution Recognizing the Importance of Free Speech on College Campuses

AUTHORS: Senator Tiffany Berkley, Senator Joel Kratt, Senator Sam Jenkins, Keith Saint

SPONSORS: Senator Rachel Belinski, Senator Rachel Muller

WHEREAS, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution stipulates Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech[1]; and,

WHEREAS, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution also stipulates the right of the people to peaceably assemble[2]; and,

WHEREAS, free speech zones limit free speech to specified areas; and,

WHEREAS, “Demonstrations may be held anywhere on the [University of Florida] campus, so long as they do not disrupt the normal operation of the University or infringe on the rights of other members of the University community, except that no demonstrations are permitted inside University buildings”[3];and,

WHEREAS, “As of 2017, the only Florida public universities that have received a ‘green light’ campus free speech rating are the University of Florida and the University of North Florida” [4][5]; and,

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States stated that the “college classroom with its surrounding environs is peculiarly the ‘marketplace of ideas’”[6]; and,

WHEREAS, the open exchange of ideas is critical to the betterment of education, society and humankind; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of free speech on college campuses.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that all Florida universities should strive to decrease restrictive speech codes, including financial, locational and material burdens, to ensure all students have the right to actively express their ideas.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages students to research Florida House Bill 909, the “Campus Free Expression Act.”

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that students should protect, uphold, and execute their First Amendment right to free speech and peaceful protest.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Governor Rick Scott, Speaker Richard Corcoran, Senate President Joe Negron, Representative Chuck Clemons, Representative Bob Rommel, Representative Clovis Watson, Representative Michael Bileca, Senator Keith Perry, Chairman of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee Robert Goodlatte, Florida State University Student Senate, University of Central Florida Student Senate, University of South Florida Student Senate, University of West Florida Student Senate, University of North Florida Student Senate, Florida A&M University Student Senate, Florida Atlantic University Student Senate, Florida Gulf Coast University Student Senate, Florida Polytechnic University Student Senate, New College of Florida Student Senate, Dr. David Parrot, and Nancy Chrystal-Green.

[1] https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first_amendment

[2] https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first_amendment

[3] <https://www.thefire.org/schools/university-of-florida/>

[4] James Madison Institute, Free expression and Intellectual Diversity: How Florida Universities Currently Measure Up. (December 14, 2017).

[5] Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, Spotlight on Free Speech Codes 2017. Available at: <https://www.thefire.org/spotlight-on-speech-codes-2017/> (last visited Jan. 17, 2018).

[6] Healy v. James, 408 U.S. 169, 180 (1972)