

**STUDENT SENATE BILL 2022-1043**

**TITLE: Resolution Condemning the Presidential Search Committee and Student Body President Lauren Lemasters for Nominating Ben Sasse as the Finalist in UF's Presidential Search**

**AUTHOR(S): Minority Party Leader Faith Corbett, Deputy Minority Party Leader Gabriela Montes, Senator Connor Panish, Senator Jonathan C. Stephens**

**SPONSOR(S): Majority Party Leader Blake Cox, Senator Kathryn Holmes, Senator Danny Wolcott, Senator Joaquin Rafele Marcelino, Senator Pari Patel, Senator Savannah Partridge, Senator Miranda Holder, Senator John Rassel, Senator Jorge Perez, Senator Grace Shoemaker, Senator Cassie Urbenz, Senator Danny Kopelman, Senator Bianca Barrios, Senator Sidney Ruedas, Senator Mason Solomon, Senator Shelby Schultz, Senator Jacey Cable**

**WHEREAS,** On October 6, 2022, the University of Florida Presidential Search Committee announced a unanimous decision to recommend United States Senator Dr. Ben Sasse as the sole finalist for consideration by the Board of Trustees, and

**WHEREAS,** The Student Body President Lauren Lemasters is a part of the Presidential Search Committee and took part in this unanimous decision, and

**WHEREAS,** In the e-mail announcement sent to the Student Body by Student Body President Lauren Lemasters, she claimed that “[Sasse] set himself apart as a candidate who deeply understands higher education and this unique moment of opportunity in the history of our institution and country”, and

**WHEREAS,** In a Press Release sent by the Board of Trustees, Senator Ben Sasse is quoted saying “It’s the most important institution in the nation’s most economically dynamic state — and its board, faculty, and graduates are uniquely positioned to lead this country through an era of disruption”, and

**WHEREAS,** Senator Ben Sasse was previously President of Midland University, a private University with an enrollment of 1600 students [1], and UF is a public university with an enrollment of 60,000 students [2], and

**WHEREAS,** Senator Ben Sasse as President of Midland University eliminated tenure positions [3], and there are currently 46 tenure and tenure track faculty at the Levin College of Law alone [4], and

**WHEREAS,** University of Florida faculty and staff have also perceived political encroachment on freedom of speech rights and education as political science professors were unable to provide witness testimony in a lawsuit that challenged state election laws [5], and

**WHEREAS**, in a statement referring to the 2015 ruling on the Supreme Court case Obergefell v. Hodges, which affirmed the right to same-sex marriage, Sasse stated “Today’s ruling is a disappointment... marriage brings a wife and husband together so their children can have a mom and a dad,” and [6]

**WHEREAS**, Senator Ben Sasse has received a 0/100 rating from the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy organization, due to his actions in Congress, and

**WHEREAS**, in a statement referring to the 2022 overturning of the Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade, which eradicated the previously protected Constitutional right to abortion access, Sasse stated “by righting a Constitutional wrong – the Supreme Court took a historic step forward”, and [7]

**WHEREAS**, Ben Sasse's history of ambivalent or careless actions to supporting Indigenous life and land such as his support of the Keystone XL Pipeline that jeopardizes Indigenous tribes within the Nebraska region are not congruent with UF Student Senate sentiments on Indigenous Land Acknowledgement [8]; and,

**WHEREAS**, The University of Florida Student Senate has a recent history of supporting our LGBTQ+ and Indigenous communities which directly oppose these sentiments [9], and

**WHEREAS**, During a scheduled campus visit on October 11th, 2022, the University Florida student, faculty, and staff communities organized a protest, involving over 300 persons, against Dr. Ben Sasse, and

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** That the University of Florida Student Senate do its part in meeting this list of demands and condemn Student Body President Lauren Lemasters's participation in a unanimous vote within the Presidential Search Committee.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** That the University of Florida Student Senate urges Student Body President Lemasters to vote ‘no’ on the confirmation of Senator Ben Sasse.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED** That the University of Student Senate condemns the Presidential Search Committee’s decision to name Senator Ben Sasse as sole finalist and opposes his confirmation due to his opposition to values directly supported by the chamber, and inexperience with the intricacies of large public institutions.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution will be sent to Senator Ben Sasse, Student Body President Lauren Lemasters, Chair of the Search Committee and Board of Trustees Member Rahul Patel, Board of Trustees Chair Morteza “Mori” Hosseini, Board of Trustees Vice Chair Thomas G. Kuntz, Board of Trustees Member David L. Brandon, Board of Trustees Member Richard P. Cole, Board of Trustees Member Christopher T. Corr, Board of Trustees Member James, W. Heavener, Board of Trustees Member Daniel T. O’Keefe, Board of Trustees Member Amanda J. Phalin, Board of Trustees Member Marsha D. Powers, Board of Trustees Member Fred S. Ridley, Board of Trustees Member Anita G. Zucker,, University President Kent Fuchs,*

[1] <https://www.midlandu.edu/midland-sets-enrollment-record/>

[2] <https://ir.aa.ufl.edu/facts/enrollment/>

[3] <https://www.alligator.org/article/2022/10/ben-sasse-visits-university-of-florida-campus>

[4] <https://www.law.ufl.edu/uflaw-faculty/faculty-and-staff-directory/tenured-and-tenure-track-faculty>

[5]

<https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2022/01/21/federal-judge-orders-preliminary-injunction-against-ufs-conflict-interest-policy/6608426001/>

[6] <https://www.sasse.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=46EFCF25-0907-4DAF-9AC3-5982EC9BDFFF>

[7] <https://mycbs4.com/news/local/ben-sasse-celebrated-roe-v-wade-reversal-and-criticized-legalizing-same-sex-marriage-university-of-florida-uf-gator-senator-trump-abortion>

[8] <https://theconversation.com/keystone-xl-debate-how-pipeline-politics-divide-nebraska-32929>, refer to The Indigenous Land Acknowledgement resolution from the UF Student Senate.

[9] <https://sg.ufl.edu/branches/legislative/senate-resources/>

[10]

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b2d5HAmIj0dbFInGTPcFhgpPkzSgpPsXv198TJ44U/edit?usp=sharing>