

Student Senate

3000 J. Wayne Reitz Union
PO Box 118505
Gainesville, FL 32611
352-392-1665

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2022-1047

TITLE: Resolution Condemning “The Johns Committee”

AUTHOR(S): Senator Jonathan C. Stephens

SPONSORS: Minority Party Leader Faith Corbett, Deputy Minority Party Leader Gabriela Montes, Senator Navya Nair, Senator Connor Panish, Senator Joaquin Rafaele Cecilia Marcelino, Senator Evan Asuncion, Senator Wavid Bowman, Senator Hana Ali, Senator Grace Shoemaker, Senator Mohammed Faisal, Senator John Rassel

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (FLIC, better known as the “Johns Committee”, under the direction of former senator Charley E. Johns, was created in 1956 [3]; and,

WHEREAS, this McCarthyite institution within the Florida Legislature tasked with discovering “communist connections among integrationist organizations and purge academic liberals and so-called ‘subversives’ from educational institutions”, serving to much of the Red Scare and Lavender Scare phenomena [3]; and,

WHEREAS, a significant target within the operations of the “Johns Committee” was the revocation and expulsion of queer faculty and staff across educational institutions, notably with gay males [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida, under the direction of malevolent faculty, committed to the provisions under the “Johns Committee” which terrorized gay men based off Lavender Scare hysteria; and,

WHEREAS, under the inner workings between faculty and the legislative committee, there was at least 15 professors and 60 students who were purged from the University of Florida [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the Johns Committee has traumatized numerous individuals like former student Art Copleston for those who were in attendance of FLIC-abetting institutions such as the University of Florida [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the “Johns Committee” committed to accomplishing the identification of queer individuals, utilizing tactics such as sexual coercion, deception, and interrogation [5]; and,

WHEREAS, because of the publication entitled “Homosexuality and Citizenship in Florida” that depicted queer people in sexually explicit manners, the “Johns Committee” was later dissolved due to constituent outrage across Florida [4]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate condemns those associated with the Johns Committee and their heinous efforts to persecute queer people within academia across the state of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the damage that faculty such as J. Wayne Reitz have had within abetting such disturbing and hostile institutions like the “Johns Committee” [2].

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of creating intentional programming and policies which reflect the support and appreciation of queer culture at the University of Florida.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to President Kent Fuchs, Provost Joseph Glover, Vice President of Student Life Heather White, Interim Dean of Students Jonathan Yorkowitz, Chief Diversity Officer Marsha McGriff, Pride Student Union President Tayler King, O-STEM President Sydney Swartman, Center for Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement Director Patricia Jordan, LGBTQ+ Student Engagement Program Director Jamir Wright, and Pride Community Center of North Central Florida President Tamara Perry-Lunardo


[1] <https://www.alligator.org/article/2020/07/a-skeleton-in-florida-s-closet-the-johns-committee-s-history-at-uf>

[2] <https://president.ufl.edu/about/past-presidents/j-wayne-reitz/>

[3] <https://web.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/exhibits/altufjohns.htm>

[4] <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00004805/00001>

[5] <https://www.vox.com/2019/11/4/20947565/florida-committee-terrorize-gay-people>


Olivia Green
Senate President

10/31/2022
Date