

Student Senate

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STUDENT SENATE BILL 2022-1059

TITLE: Resolution Commemorating November as American Native Heritage Month

AUTHOR(S): Senator Cassie Urbenz

SPONSORS: Senator Jonathan Chance Stephens, Senator Nyla Pierre, Senator Mimi Abrucia, Senator Nathan McGinnis, Senator Anjali Natarajan, Senator Joaquin Rafaele Cecilia Marcelino, Senator Julia Seifer, Senator John Rassel, Senator Hana Ali, Senator Ashley Shakib, Deputy Minority Party Leader Gabriela Montes, Senator Oscar Santiago Perez, Minority Party Leader Faith Corbett, Senator Miranda Holder, Senator Connor Panish

WHEREAS, On August 3, 1990, President of the United States George H. W. Bush declared the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month, thereafter commonly referred to as Native American Heritage Month [1]; and,

WHEREAS, there are a multitude of terms (such as Indigenous, Indian, Aboriginal, Native American, Native...) used to refer to the communities of peoples celebrated and supported during this month, each with their own shortcomings in terms of specificity and problematic origin; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Report by The University of Florida's African and Native American History Task Force, "the history of relations between UF and Native Americans is unwritten but embedded in the land and its material resources. Founded on a legacy of Indigenous land dispossession across the entire nation, land-grant universities like the University of Florida are an extension of settler colonialism that converted landscapes of native dwelling into public and private property" [2]; and,

WHEREAS, The University of Florida is located on the ancestral territory of the Potano and of the Seminole peoples. The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived here in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the destruction of their towns in the early 1700s. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forced from the land as a result of a series of wars with the United States known as the Seminole Wars [3]; and,

WHEREAS, The University of Florida Smathers Libraries located beyond the Gainesville campus occupy the ancestral and present homelands of the Ais, Apalachee, Calusa, Creek, Miccosukee, and Yamasee as well as many other Native peoples who lived in this region since time immemorial [3]; and,

WHEREAS, through the Morrill Act of 1862 to Fund a Land-Grant University, lands were

seized from *over 130 tribes*: the Great and Little Osage, Kansas, Confederated Pawnee: Grand Pawnee, Pawnee Loup, Pawnee Republicans, Pawnee Tappaye residing on the Platt and Loup Fork, Chippewa, Pawnee (four confederated bands), A-pang-asse, Aplache, A-wall-a-che, Co-co-noon, Po-to-yan-ti, Si-yan-te, Cas-son, Cho-e-nem-nee, Cho-ki-men-a, Chook-cha-nee, Chow-chil-lie, How-edh-ee, I-tach-ee, Nook-choo, No-to-no-to, Pas-ke-sa, Pit-cat-chee, Po-ho-nee-chee, Tall-in-chee, Toom-na, Wa-cha-et, We-mal-che, Ko-ya-te, New-chow-we, Pal-wis-ha, Po-ken-well, Wack-sa-che, Wo-la-si, Ya-wil-chine, Chap-pah-sim, Co-to-plan-e-nee, I-o-no-hum-ne, Sage-womnee, Su-ca-ah, We-chil-la, Chu-nute, Co-ye-tie, Wo-wol, Yo-lum-ne, Be-no-pi, Das-pia, Mon-e-da; Nem-shaw, On-o-po-ma, Wai-de-pa-can, Wan-nuck, Ya-cum-na, Ya-ma-do, Yol-la-mer, Be-no-pi, Das-pia, Mon-e-da, Nem-shaw, On-o-po-ma, Wai-de-pa-can, Wan-nuck, Ya-cum-na, Ya-ma-do, Yol-la-mer, Sioux (Wahpeton and Sisseton Bands), Ya-cum-na, Ya-ma-do, Yol-la-mer, Bat-si, Che-no, Es-ki-un, Ho-lo-lu-pi, Mi-chop-da, Sim-sa-wa, Su-nu, To-to, Yut-duc, Ca-la-na-po, Cha-nel-kai, Che-com, Da-no-ha-bo, Ha-bi-na-po, How-ku-ma, Me-dam-a-rec, Mas-su-ta-ka-ya, Po-mo, Sai-nell, Yu-ki-as Cha, Cham-et-ko, Co-ha-ma, Co-lu, Doc-duc, Tat-nah, Toc-de, Wil-lay, Cu-lee; Loc-lum-ne; Wo-pum-ne; Yas-see, Hoo-pah or Trinity River, Peh-tuck or Upper Klamath, Poh-lik or Lower Klamath, Rogue River Indians, Omaha, Chasta, Grave Creek, Scoton, Calapooia, Umpqua, Chippewa of the Mississippi, Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla-walla, Confederated Tribes of middle Oregon, Flathead, Kootenay, Upper Pend d'Orelles, Coast Tribes of Oregon, Blackfoot, Ontonagon band, Nez Percè, Blackfoot and Flathead Nations, Yankton Sioux, Arapaho of Upper Arkansas, Cheyenne of Upper Arkansas, Washo, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Uta (Tabeguache, Muache, Capote, Weeminuchi, Yampa, Grand River, and Uintah bands) [2]; and,

WHEREAS, representations of Native Americans can be found in the university's yearbook *the Seminole*, which ran from 1910-1973. The inaugural edition included a chapter dedicated to a problematic caricature of the Seminole tribe. No mention of land dispossession is offered and no credit was given to the tribe for use of their name for the yearbook; and,

WHEREAS, 1 in 19 secondary schools nationwide still have Native mascots, with the National Congress of American Indians reporting that 1,927 schools maintain the use of racist monikers, which has three main acts of detriment against Native communities:

- [1] Perpetuates inaccurate misconceptions about American Indian culture
- [2] Establishes an unwelcome and oftentimes hostile learning environment for Native students
- [3] Institutionalizes and normalizes prejudice and discrimination against Native peoples [6]; and,

WHEREAS, Students of Native American heritage have never comprised more than 0.6 percent of UF's undergraduate body [2],

WHEREAS, Indigenous women and two-spirit people are far more statistically likely to go missing and/or fall victim to murder, with the National Crime Information Center reporting a major discrepancy between reported cases (5,712) and those logged in the Department of Justice database (116), meaning only 2% of cases that were reported were logged by the DOJ [4]; and,

WHEREAS, in 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was passed in order to respond to a crisis of Indigenous children being separated from their families and communities, even when fit relatives were willing and able, addressing longstanding and egregious removal practices [5];

and,

WHEREAS, continued activism done by Native peoples like the Lakota People's Law Project helps to further address community needs, especially in relation to the safety of Native children, Native voting rights, harmful extraction prevention, and returning of sacred lands [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida has local chapters of national organizations like Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS), Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), and the American Indian in Science and Engineering Society (AISES) that support Indigenous students' professional development and overall well-being; and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous communities have contributed greatly to LGBTQ+ conversations and movements, especially those of two-spirit identification [7]; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate celebrates November as a month to celebrate and recenter on supporting Indigenous communities; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for students to use terminology that is acceptable to the Indigenous groups in question; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the growth of resources like Indigenous-centered social events and tailored coursework within the University of Florida to help further Indigenous voices on campus; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate appreciates and commends the contributions of people of Native descent to American popular culture and history.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Dean of the College of the Arts Onye Ozuzu, Dean of the School of Theatre and Dance Peter Carpenter, UF MANRRS President Jieli Wegerif, UF MANRRS Secretary Julianna Cromie, Gator AISES President Hunter Goan, Gator AISES Secretary Jillian Wessel, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences David E. Richardson, Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering Cammy Abernathy, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Elaine Turner, Director of Sorority and Fraternity Life Simonne Horman.

[1] https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/American_Indian_Heritage_Month.htm#:~:text=Every%20year%2C%20by%20statute%20and,senators%20of%20Native%20American%20descent.

[2] https://antiracism.ufl.edu/media/antiracismufledu/Task_Force_Report_FINAL_3_622.pdf

[3] <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/LandAcknowledgment/home>

[4] <https://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Missing-and-Murdered-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-Report.pdf>

[5] <https://lakotalaw.org/about>

[6] <https://peoplenotmascots.us/about.html>

[7] <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/a35255268/two-spirit/>



Olivia Green
Senate President

11/17/22
Date