

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1212

TITLE: Resolution Calling for the Decriminalization and/or Legalization of Marijuana and Cannabinoid Substances within the University of Florida Campus, the City of Gainesville, and the State of Florida

AUTHOR(S): Judiciary Chair Jonathan C. Stephens

SPONSOR(S): Senator Hana Ali, Senator Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Anghelo Gangano

WHEREAS, cannabis - also known as weed, herb, pot, grass, bud, ganja, and Mary Jane - is a mind-altering psychoactive drug; and,

WHEREAS, the active ingredient for cannabis usage is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) - found in a multitude of variants such as Delta 8, Delta 9, and Delta 10 - is the major psychoactive component within cannabis [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Cannabidiol (CBD) “ is the second most prevalent active ingredient in cannabis” which is not psychoactive but has been known to “reduce anxiety... lower cravings in tobacco... manage chronic pain... and manage insomnia” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, recent research establishes that THC provides a multitude of health benefits, including “Managing Multiple Sclerosis Spasticity”, “Addressing Chronic Pain”, “Improving Sleep Quality”, and “Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects”, among others [3]; and,

WHEREAS, historically, organizations like Students for Sensible Drug Policy have uncovered the historic abuse of drug control legislation and policy against “Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans” and “poor people of color” [4]; and,

WHEREAS, Florida Statute 893.13(6)(b) establishes that any person who “[possesses] of 20 grams or less of cannabis... commits a misdemeanor of the first degree”, which is punishable by up to 1 year of incarceration and a maximum fine of \$1,000 USD [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida's 2022 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) denoted that 39.1% students participate in non-medical usage of cannabis [6]; and,

WHEREAS, while the State of Florida has legalized medical marijuana usage, the application process for obtaining a medical marijuana card has requirements including getting an evaluation from a physician and providing a \$75-\$90 fee in order to properly apply for the card [7]; and,

WHEREAS, certain students who may struggle with conditions that cannabis usage could alleviate could have limited financial constraints and/or medical limitations which could thus bar them from accessing such services; and,

WHEREAS, the potential for students to be criminalized for using substances to alleviate constraints within their lives is something that is absurd and only continues to put our most vulnerable student populations at risk; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the University of Florida Police Department (UFPD) and Gainesville Police Department (GPD) to adopt provisions that decriminalize the usage of marijuana and cannabinoid substances for individuals over the age of 21 years of age; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for changes on the Florida State level to adopt provisions that decriminalize the usage of marijuana and cannabinoid substances for individuals over the age of 21 years of age; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate supports the current petitions circulating across the State of Florida to legalize the recreational usage of marijuana through constitutional amendment ballot initiative; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University of Florida Student Senate "neither condones nor condemns drug use, rather we respect the right of individuals to make decisions about their own health and well-being", as established within the Students for Sensible Drug Policy [4].

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Florida Governor Ron Desantis, University of Florida President Dr. Benjamin Sasse, University of Florida Police Department Chief Linda J. Stump-Kurnick, City of Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward, City of Gainesville Police Department Chief Lonnie Scott Sr., and UF Students for Sensible Drug Policy President Thomas Child.

[1] -

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK563174/#:~:text=Delta%2D9%2Dtetrahydrocannabinol%20\(THC,in%20exploring%20its%20medical%20utility.](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK563174/#:~:text=Delta%2D9%2Dtetrahydrocannabinol%20(THC,in%20exploring%20its%20medical%20utility.)

[2] - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/cannabidiol-cbd-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-2018082414476>

[3] - <https://www.forbes.com/health/cbd/health-benefits-of-cannabis/>

[4] - <https://ssdp.org/our-work/marijuana-policy-reform/>

[5] - m.flsenate.gov/statutes/893.13

[6] - <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/health-data/uf-student-survey-reports/>

[7] - <https://www.mmtcfl.com/florida-medical-marijuana-card/>


Oscar Santiago Perez
Senate President

9/19/23
Date