

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1220

TITLE: AUTHORIZATION ORDERING SENATE BUDGETARY FUNDS TOWARDS ESTABLISHING THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM APPLICATION PROJECT

AUTHOR(S): Senator Asif Islam

SPONSOR(S): Judiciary Chair Jonathan C. Stephens, Minority Party Leader Simone Liang, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Nima Aria, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Mental Health Committee Co-Chair Wavid Bowman, Senator Anamika Naidu

WHEREAS, many students at the University of Florida, and many residents who reside in Gainesville at large, have leveled complaints about the RTS (Regional Transit System) app for a number of reasons, including but not limited to: the fact that it is poorly optimized, it tends to crash a lot, and it is not functional on all devices; and,

WHEREAS, a lone student at the University of Florida, Jonathan Wukitsch, has made a more user-friendly, more accessible, more functional app to follow the schedule of RTS buses' arrivals at given stops, as well as real-time tracking of the buses' live positions, in his spare time [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the app developed by Jonathan Wukitsch only works on devices running the operating system iOS 16 and later, and as such, still holds major barriers of entry for the approximately 45% of the American phone-using population that are on Android devices [2]; and,

WHEREAS, even amongst iPhone users or devices that utilize iOS as the operating system, over 13% of users are still utilizing versions of iOS that are below iOS 16.0 [3]; and,

WHEREAS, at least 77% of students attending the University of Florida reside in off-campus residences, meaning that if those students lack a car, bicycle, scooter, or other form of transportation, they may be forced to exclusively rely on riding the bus to attend classes on campus [4,5]; and,

WHEREAS, even if students are living on-campus, this does not disbar the possibility that they may still utilize the RTS buses for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: getting to class, going to the gym (i.e., Southwest Rec), or receiving subsidized transportation around Gainesville at large (i.e., Butler Plaza); and,

WHEREAS, data collected by the RTS shows that, over the course of the past fiscal year, the RTS serviced over 3.8 million unique rides without even having yet collected data for the months of July, August, and September [6]; and,

WHEREAS, a resolution co-authored by Budget and Appropriations Chairman Cox and former Senator Shoemaker shows that there has been bipartisan support for an SG initiative aimed at addressing the failures of the current RTS app since at least 2022 [7]; and,

WHEREAS, students at the University of Florida have shown their resilience and initiative when it comes to addressing problems being faced by the student body at large, even when there are no tangible rewards involved; and,

WHEREAS, we, the Student Senate of the University of Florida, are called on to serve as responsible financial stewards of the A&S fees collected from our fellow students; and,

WHEREAS, keeping in line with the aforementioned responsibilities, and in order to provide the best possible service at an affordable price, the Student Senate of the University of Florida believes it best to employ students to create this SG-sponsored RTS app; and,

WHEREAS, as stipulated in Article III, Section 5 of the University of Florida Student Government Constitution, the Senate President shall serve as the chief administrative officer of the Student Body [8]; and,

WHEREAS, as stipulated in Article III, Section 6(j) of the University of Florida Student Government Constitution, the Student Senate has the power and duty to “provide for the control and disbursement of Student Body funds” [8]; and,

WHEREAS, as stipulated in Article IV, Section 4(e) of the University of Florida Student Government Constitution, a power of the Student Body President is to “create and appoint committees or commissions not provided in this Constitution, if deemed necessary, provided that these bodies do not contravene Student Body law” [8]; and,

WHEREAS, Student Senate Bill 2022-1026 allocated \$7,500.00 USD into the line item entitled “Senate” under “Administrative Account-602” under the Senate President’s control [9]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE ORDERED THAT the Senate President disburses \$2,000.00 USD from the FY23-24 Budget line entitled “Senate” under “Administrative Account-602” to create the *SG RTS App* project, in the name of creating an app that is capable of functioning on a variety of devices and operating systems, does not crash as frequently as the current RTS app, is regularly updated, features faster refresh times to provide more accurate real-time tracking of the buses, and features a more user-friendly interface; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE ORDERED THAT the Student Body President shall convene a special commission, upon being notified by Senator Asif Islam that suitable student candidates have been identified for the team, that is tasked with overseeing the *SG RTS App* project and the operation of the \$2,000.00 allocated funds (with the app named at the discretion of the Senate President), with Senator Asif Islam as the Chair of the commission.

Proviso: A copy of this authorization will be sent to the following people: Student Body President Olivia Green, Student Body Vice President Clara Calavia, Student Body Treasurer Nyla Pierre, Senate President Oscar Santiago Perez, Senate President Pro-Tempore Nathan McGinnis, Budget and Appropriations Committee Chairman Blake Cox, Senator Asif Islam, and Jonathan Wukitsch.

All excess funds not utilized by the project shall return to the FY23-24 Budget Line item entitled “SG Projects Line” under “Administrative Account-602”.

- [1] https://www.reddit.com/r/ufl/comments/14se2wr/i_just_released_navigator_a_better_rts_bus/
- [2] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1045192/share-of-mobile-operating-systems-in-north-america-by-month/>
- [3] <https://gs.statcounter.com/ios-version-market-share/mobile-tablet/united-states-of-america/#monthly-202306-202306-bar>
- [4] <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/university-of-florida-1535/student-life#:~:text=University%20of%20Florida%20has%20a,of%20students%20live%20off%20ocampus.>
- [5] <https://facilities.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/plan/2020-2030/data/Housing%20DandA%202020.pdf>
- [6] http://go-rts.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/June_23_-Ridership.pdf
- [7] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pZDKyJE1k2gph9JZggO4uo_Vt73z57JW/edit
- [8] <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Constitution-as-of-2016.pdf>
- [9] <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SSB-2022-1026-Funding-for-Fiscal-Year-2023-2024-Activity-Service-Fee-Budget.pdf>