

**STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1055**

**TITLE: Resolution Advocating for the Creation of an Unarmed Community Response Team**

**AUTHOR(S): Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton**

**SPONSOR(S): Senator Isha Khan, Senator Hunter Monson**

**WHEREAS**, the University of Florida Student Government Senate acknowledges a greater need for a safer and more inclusive on-campus and off-campus environment for all students, staff, and faculty; and,

**WHEREAS**, the University of Florida Police Department mission statement includes a commitment “to preserve a safe, secure campus environment where diverse social, cultural and academic values are allowed to develop and prosper through a combination of reactive, proactive and educational law enforcement services;” [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the role of police departments across the United States has shifted following numerous instances of severe racial-based police violence, including the murders of Rodney King [2], Michael Brown [3], George Floyd [4], Breonna Taylor [5], and many others stemming from decades of systemic racism, discriminatory policing and centuries of violence toward various intersectionalities of society; and,

**WHEREAS**, the University of Florida Police Department runs the Gator Emergency Medical Response Unit (GEMRU), of which trained student volunteers respond to EMS-related 911 emergency calls, showcasing the existence of volunteer-based community emergency service response teams at the University of Florida and the potential for a further expansion to more general forms of community response [6]; and,

**WHEREAS**, cities across the United States have employed various forms of community response teams, including the Community Assistance and Life Liaison (CALL) program in St. Petersburg, FL [7], the People in Crisis (PIC) program in Rochester, NY [8], and the Support Team Assistance Response (STAR) program in Denver, CO [9], all of which offer citywide access to two-person teams of mental health professionals upon request through emergency and non-emergency city phone lines; and,

**WHEREAS**, a study conducted by Stanford University regarding Denver CO’s STAR program success from December 2019 to November 2020 discovered the program led to a 30% reduction in STAR-related offenses and a 14% reduction in overall crimes in which alcohol and drugs,

disorderly conduct, and other crimes against persons were involved, showcasing the efficacy of such a program [10]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the University of Michigan President Santa J. Ono issued a statement on September 21, 2023, regarding the necessity for non-police emergency response programs at universities and announced the creation of such a program at the university [11]; now,

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate urges the University of Florida and the City of Gainesville to pilot an unarmed community response team program; and,

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate commits to engage in the development and collaborative implementation of an unarmed community response team pilot program within the University of Florida and the City of Gainesville.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, University of Florida Student Body President Olivia Green, University of Florida Chief of Police Linda J Stump-Kurnick, City of Gainesville Chief of Police Lonnie Scott, City of Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward, City of Gainesville Commissioner At-Large One Cynthia Chestnut, City of Gainesville Commissioner At-Large Two Reina Saco, City of Gainesville Commissioner District One Desmon Duncan-Walker, City of Gainesville Commissioner District Two Ed Book, City of Gainesville Commissioner District Three Casey Willits, City of Gainesville Commissioner District Four Bryan Eastman.*

[1] <https://police.ufl.edu/our-department/#:~:text=The%20mission%20of%20the%20University,and%20educational%20law%20enforcement%20services.>

[2] <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/saytheirnames/feature/rodney-king>

[3] <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/saytheirnames/feature/michael-brown>

[4] <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/saytheirnames/feature/george-floyd>

[5] <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/saytheirnames/feature/breonna-taylor>

[6] <https://police.ufl.edu/gemru/>

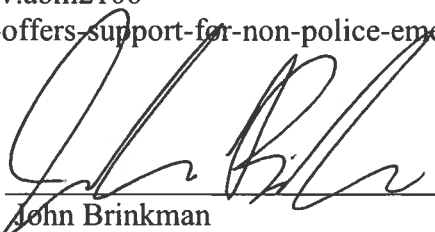
[7] <https://police.stpete.org/call/index.html#gsc.tab=0>

[8] <https://www.cityofrochester.gov/crisisintervention/>

[9] <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Public-Health-Environment/Community-Behavioral-Health/Behavioral-Health-Strategies/Support-Team-Assisted-Response-STAR-Program>

[10] <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abm2106>

[11] <https://record.umich.edu/articles/president-offers-support-for-non-police-emergency-response-program/>

  
John Brinkman  
Senate President

2/7/2024  
Date