

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1066

TITLE: Resolution Condemning SB 846 & Its Effects on International Graduate Students

AUTHOR(S): Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Senator Asif Islam

SPONSOR(S): Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Deputy Minority Party Leader Anamika Naidu, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Simone Liang, Senator Allan Rivera Jaramillo, Senator Isha Khan, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Chalisa Budhai, Senator Antonio Hendricks, Senator Sarah Hoffer, Senator Arturo Zárrate, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Stephens, Volunteers for International Student Affairs Vice President of Internal Affairs Hana Ali

WHEREAS, introduced January 9, 2024, Florida State Senate Bill 846 restricts public universities & colleges from “accepting grants from or participating in partnerships or agreements” from any “foreign country of concern,” thus affecting international graduate students within the state of Florida [1]; and,

WHEREAS, it is listed that the seven foreign countries of concern include “People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Republic of Cuba, the Venezuelan regime of Nicolás Maduro, or the Syrian Arab Republic” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida amongst all other public universities within Florida are obligated to comply with the restriction, thus impacting graduate students pursuing their doctorate or PhD., who “typically receive an accompanying offer of employment... in the form of a research or teaching assistant position” [3]; and,

WHEREAS, with the effective date of SB 846 being July 1, 2024, prospective international students looking for assistantship along with admission are submitting their applications & may be dissuaded from attending the University of Florida [4]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2020, it is recorded that 1,100 students from China & 83 students from Iran made up the University of Florida’s international graduate student body [5]; and,

WHEREAS, it is recorded that “more than 1000 students from the impacted countries enroll in the program” every fall, and due to SB 846, there would be significant detriment to advance the university & its excellence amongst the nation’s other public universities [3]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, nonresidents made up 75.97% of doctorate-degree students & 38.85% of masters-degree students at the University of Florida [8]; and,

WHEREAS, admission & assistantship of international graduate students are integral for the University of Florida achieving a top 10 ranking within the coming decade, a long-term goal of University of Florida upper-leadership, which these students & their contributions cannot be disregarded; and,

WHEREAS, international graduate students rely on assistantships for stipends, salaries, tuition waivers, & access to research opportunities, essentially barring applicants from the seven impacted countries from accepting admission opportunities from public universities within Florida; and,

WHEREAS, as of December 14, 2023, over 300 University of Florida Faculty have signed a document and sent a petition to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, Provost Angle, Associate Provost Hass, & Faculty Chair Wright emphasizing the importance of international students from SB 846’s listed foreign countries of concern & their contributions to the University of Florida’s prestige, scholarship, & academic advancement [3]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, the National Science Board published a report detailing the impact of international graduate student STEM talent on the larger economy, & how international graduate students make up significant population of the knowledge-&-technology-intensive industry workforce following graduation [6]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2011, foreign-born individuals accounted for “71 percent of the full-time graduate students in electrical engineering, 65 percent in computer science, 61 percent in

industrial engineering, & more than 50 percent in economics, chemical engineering, materials engineering, & mechanical engineering” [7]; and,

WHEREAS, “over half of doctorate holders employed in academic engineering & computer & information sciences are foreign-born,” detailing the importance of their contributions to American industries as well as how the work & research conducted by them at both the professional & graduate levels are integral to academic & scientific advancement [6]; and,

WHEREAS, as listed within the faculty letter to President Ben Sasse, it is of the utmost importance that this issue be dealt with speed & efficiency – as many applications for U.S. graduate schools are due between the end of December & start of January – in order to grant faculty ample time to “recruit top competitive international graduate students with assistantship, irrespective of their nationality” [3]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of international students from the seven impacted countries & calls upon University of Florida leadership to heed the requests of University of Florida faculty; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that verbal offers of assistantship should not be rescinded from potential international graduate students due to SB 846 [5]; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that international graduate student applicants to the University of Florida must be offered assistantship irrespective of where they are from, but rather, evaluated & offered based on their merit & abilities; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate condemns the restrictions placed on international graduate students from the seven impacted countries, & the University of Florida Student Senate takes a stand against barring assistantship from individuals as a consequence of their national origin.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, Associate Provost, Graduate Council Chair, and Dean of the University of Florida Graduate

School Dr. Nicole Stedman, UF Graduate Student Council Representative Kevin Senior, Dean of UF International Center & Associate Provost Marta L. Wayne, Vice President for Student Life Heather White, Director of Campus Engagement & Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Life James Tyger.

[1] <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/846/BillText/er/PDF>

[2] <https://www.flsenate.gov/laws/statutes/2021/288.860>

[3]

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezPVkPI6o1aVzy388egl1hhoNKEpnkP0623ByfPptLclKtYg/viewform?pli=1>


[4] <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/846>

[5] <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/us/florida-law-chills-chinese-student-recruitment.html>

[6] <https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/sei/one-pagers/NSB-International-STEM-Talent-2022.pdf>

[7] https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/ie_mayjun14_frontlines.pdf

[8] <https://ir.aa.ufl.edu/facts/diversity/>


John Brinkman 2/7/2024
Senate President Date