

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1127

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for Disability Awareness Initiative

AUTHOR(S): Senator Laura Jane Bryan, Senator Marian Enriquez, and Senator Raj Mia

SPONSOR(S): Senator Kishan Nayak, Senator Laurie Wang, Senator Gabriela Prieto, Senator Keegan Dunnam, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Senator Roman Quattrochi, Senate Isa Penin, Senator Aditi Sarkar, Senator Abby Whitaker, Senator Aaron Amster, Senator Christain Jubran, Senator Annabelle Vigna, Senator Coe Leavengood

WHEREAS, the Alligator has noted that “more than 6,800 students” are registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as of 2023 and the DRC has acknowledged they work with “over 5,500 Gators” [1] [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida is an institution that strives for diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of campus life; and,

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act requires certain standards of accessibility for all buildings and campus facilities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability [3]; and,

WHEREAS, students have previously raised concerns about the extent of programs at UF and their impact on promoting inclusivity [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Senate understands that individuals with physical disabilities face unique challenges within our community, necessitating heightened understanding and awareness [1]; and,

WHEREAS, diversity and inclusivity are integral components of a thriving college campus, playing a pivotal role in fostering growth, unity, and enriching the overall educational experience [5]; and,

WHEREAS, to help create acceptance for individuals who face physical disabilities, a vital component is raising awareness and educating individuals on physical disabilities among the student body[6]; and,

WHEREAS, it is not enough to merely acknowledge that discriminating against people with disabilities is unjust [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the Disability Resource Center provides presentations or consultations on their activities to interested students, faculty and staff [8]; and,

WHEREAS, there needs to be a heightened awareness; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that raising awareness about physical disabilities is crucial for fostering an inclusive campus community.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that educating students about disabilities and encouraging advocacy is essential for building a compassionate and supportive campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate commends the existing efforts of the DRC to promote awareness of issues affecting students with disabilities.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls for the comprehensive expansion of programs within the university aimed at educating students about physical disabilities and empowering them to become advocates will foster inclusivity, empathy, and support for individuals with physical disabilities.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, University of Florida Disability Resource Center Director Jenna Gonzalez, University of Florida Student Activities & Involvement Interim Director Justin Donnelly, University of Florida Division of Student Life Vice President Heather White, Disability Ambassadors Co-President Connor Panish, Disability Ambassadors Co-President Natalia Fermin, Persons with Disabilities Student Member Ronin Lupien, Persons with Disabilities Student Member Mikhail Mikhaylov, Persons with Disabilities Student Member Clementine Dela Cruz, Persons with Disabilities Student Member Ayesha Khuddus, Persons with Disabilities Student Member Aidan Coffey

[1] <https://www.alligator.org/article/2023/07/uf-disability-accessibility-resources>

[2] <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

[3] <https://www.ada.gov/resources/disability-rights-guide/>

[4] <https://www.alligator.org/article/2022/04/students-with-disabilities-question-ufs-accessibility-efforts>

[5] <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/BoardDiversityStatement-June2012.pdf>

[6] <https://www.weaverindustries.org/blog-details/why-its-important-to-raise-awareness-around-disabilities>

[7] <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1228962.pdf>

[8] <https://disability.ufl.edu/request-a-presentation-or-consultation/>

