

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1132

TITLE: Resolution Calling on the University of Florida Administration to Provide Enhanced Gender-Neutral Bathroom Access on Campus Grounds for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People

AUTHOR(S): Senator Arturo Zárrate and Majority Party Leader Julia Seifer

SPONSOR(S): Young Democratic Socialists of America Co-Chair Syd Engstrom, Young Democratic Socialists of America Co-Chair Gabriel Vasquez, Young Democratic Socialists of America Treasurer Meir Scochet, Young Democratic Socialists of America Membership Director Max Kappalman, LGBTQ Affairs Cabinet Director Riley Tobin, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Daniel Permane, Senator Anamika Naidu, Senator Sarah Hoffer, Senator Allan Rivera Jaramillo, Senator Meagan Lamey, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Chalisa Budhai, Senator Isha Khan, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Caitlyn Mathews, Senator Simone Liang, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Vivian Phung, Senator Antonio Hendricks, Senator Zoe Richter, Senator Coe Leavengood, Senator Abby Whitaker, Senator Christian Jubran, Senator Samantha Kinggard, Senator Marian Enriquez, Senator Catherine Isakson, Senator Isa Penin, Senator Jason Von Holten, Senator Annabella Vigna, Senator Halle Burton, Senator Reese Marcus, Senator Bianca Onorato, Senator Kishan Nayak, Senator Megan McGuire, Senator Zachary Arzt, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Senator Aleah Henley, Senator Monish Vijayaragavan, Senator Noor Azeem, Senator Aditi Sarkar, Baking4Wellness Treasurer Oscar Santiago Perez, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Chance Stephens, Pride Student Union Treasurer Tikiri Ekanayake, Queer Asian, Pacific Islander and Desi President Shubhika Agarwal, Senate President Pro Tempore Saketh Damera, Member-At-Large Laurel Wentworth, Member-At-Large Maya Idiculla, Senator Aaron Amster, Senator Aaron Rubaii, Senator Angelina Fentress, Senator Bianca Barrios, Senator Conor Ruffin, Senator Damian Rodriguez, Senator Evan Rafanan, Senator Gabriel Filomino Vargas, Senator Gabriela Prieto, Senator Jason Drucker, Senator Joah Levine, Senator Jonathan Bedine, Senator Laura Jane Bryan, Senator Marian Enriquez, Senator Nicole Gigliotti, Senator Vivienne Serret, Chairman Monish Vijayaraghavan, Senator Cec Wood Barron, Senate President John Brinkman

WHEREAS, the University of Florida seeks to be an inclusive establishment and prohibits discrimination on the basis of “sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, [and] gender transition status” [1], per the office for Accessibility and Gender Equity; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Body Constitution affirms in Article I, Section 4 that discrimination against certain protected classes of the student body is prohibited, including discrimination on the basis of “sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals experiencing gender dysphoria use different methods in order to align their gender identity with their gender expression; and,

WHEREAS, continuing to label single-occupant restrooms as “gender-neutral” would promote inclusivity and equity for people with various gender identities ; and,

WHEREAS, access to safe and accommodating bathroom facilities is a fundamental human right, essential for the dignity, health, and well-being of all individuals, particularly those of transgender and gender non-conforming identities; and,

WHEREAS, restrictive legislation and policies, including but not limited to HB1521, that deny access to bathroom facilities based on one's sex assigned at birth disproportionately impact transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, infringing upon their rights as humans and contributing to negative health and social outcomes[3][4]; and,

WHEREAS, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are frequently denied these services due to legislation that prevents them from entering lavatories that do not match their sex assigned at birth[2]; and,

WHEREAS, the punishments outlined for individuals found to be in violation of legislation such as HB1521 are extraordinarily harsh, placing in danger people who merely wish to use the bathrooms[3]; and,

WHEREAS, there are documented cases of transgender individuals being unable to enter lavatories, leading to unnecessary commute and stress,[4] leading to lowered worker productivity and/or academic performance; and,

WHEREAS, these discriminatory policies make it so that feminine-appearing individuals are placed into the male bathrooms, masculine-appearing individuals are placed into the female bathrooms, resulting in uncomfortable experiences that disproportionately affect transgender and gender non-conforming individuals; and,

WHEREAS, with or without this legislation, gender non-conforming individuals are unable to safely and comfortably access and use lavatories, completely excluding them from these necessary structures; and,

WHEREAS, single-occupancy gender-neutral bathrooms bear less risk for its occupants, and are more time- and cost-effective [5]; and,

WHEREAS, gender-neutral bathrooms provide this service for all people without the unnecessary division, and provide a more comfortable experience for all currently-disenfranchised peoples, including but not limited to transgender and other gender non-conforming individuals on this campus; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for an increased number of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus grounds.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for the University of Florida to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase the number of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus, ensuring they are evenly distributed and accessible in all university buildings.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recommends the University to collaborate with organizations representing LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse students in the planning and implementing these facilities.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that the University of Florida must do more to properly recognize the needs of transgender and genderqueer students on its campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals to have space in the University of Florida dedicated to them, and calls on the University to provide at least one gender-neutral bathroom per University building.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University shall establish a feedback mechanism for students to report concerns, suggestions, or issues related to gender-neutral bathrooms, ensuring continuous improvement at the oversight of the LGBTQ Affairs Executive Cabinet and the Office of LGBTQ+ Student Engagement.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for the University of Florida to review and reform any existing policies that may inadvertently hinder the accessibility and availability of gender-neutral bathrooms throughout campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for the University of Florida to update its map of gender-neutral restrooms in order to better meet the needs of its Students.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED the University of Florida Student Senate hereby reaffirms its unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and respectful campus environment meant to uphold the dignity, rights, and well-being of all members of our university community, today and in the future.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Board of Trustees Chair Mori Hosseini, University President Ben Sasse, Senior Vice President of Construction, Facilities, and Auxiliary Dave Kratzer, Vice President of Student Life Heather White, Interim Provost Scott Angle, Assistant Vice President for Design, Construction, Planning Cydney McGlothlin, Senator Arturo Zárrate, Director of Facilities Management Chad Doering, and Ronin Lupien.

