

**STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1332**

**TITLE: Resolution Commemorating Our RTS Bus Drivers**

**AUTHOR(S): Senator Vivian Phung**

**SPONSOR(S): Senator Fahim Islam, Senator Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Michael Lim, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Meagan Lamey, Senator Isha Khan, Majority Party Leader Julia Seifer, Rules & Ethics Chairwoman Samantha Kinggard, Judiciary Chairman Aaron Rubaii, Senator Victoria Peters, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Deputy Minority Party Leader Max Banach, Minority Party Leader Anamika Naidu, and Information & Communications Chairwoman Laurel Wentworth**

**WHEREAS**, the Gainesville Regional Transport System has supported UF and the Gainesville community now in their 50th anniversary, transporting over 200 million people since [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, it costs an average of \$26,533 for a used car [2], an average of between \$300 and \$600 to purchase an average electric scooter [3], an average of between \$100 and \$500 to purchase a department store bike [4] our RTS bus drivers provide means for thousands of students to still be able to get to school, work, appointments and anywhere past their homes affordably; and,

**WHEREAS**, RTS bus drivers build connections in the community by becoming friendly and familiar faces within the Gainesville community. Upon interview, UF student and a frequent user of RTS says that “I have developed a fond relationship with my RTS bus drivers.”; and,

**WHEREAS**, handling traffic, difficult navigation of roads while transporting dozens of riders, weather conditions, and diverse passengers, they continue to practice professionalism and kindness in the Gainesville community; and,

**WHEREAS**, RTS employs over 200 drivers, many of whom are supporting their families [5]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the mission of RTS and their drivers is “To enhance the quality of life in our community by providing safe, courteous, equitable, reliable and energy-efficient transportation services,” [6]; and,

**WHEREAS**, taking public transport is much safer than other means of transport. According to the American Public Transportation Association, there is a 90% reduction in the chance of

getting in an accident by taking public transportation compared to cars, making it “10 times safer per mile”. [11]; and,

**WHEREAS**, 6.9 % of Gainesville’s population has a disability as of 2022 [7]. RTS drivers support ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) certified individuals throughout the city of Gainesville; and,

**WHEREAS**, according to the Pew Research Center, the highest percentage of American residents who use public transportation are African Americans at 34%, Hispanics at 27%, and immigrants at 38% compared to whites at 14%. Hispanics, African Americans, and immigrants are minorities in the city of Gainesville making up 12% (Hispanic) and 11.3% (Immigrants) of the Gainesville population [8]; and,

**WHEREAS**, “operating a bus is hard on your body” as bus drivers often are required to sit for hours and hours at a time, navigating roads not always designed for difficult traffic and road infrastructure, especially in Gainesville’s notoriously difficult traffic and parking [9]; and,

**WHEREAS**, bus drivers face are amongst the highest to face many stress-related diseases and weight-related conditions [9]; and,

**WHEREAS**, bus drivers require hard and soft skills in being able to skillfully drive and operate larger-than-average vehicles with an average size of 8.4 feet wide on roads predominantly fitting cars [10]; then,

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED**, the RTS bus drivers put in admirable efforts as bus drivers and are an integral part of our community; and,

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, we are grateful for the essential role they play in the livelihood of students of the University of Florida and the city of Gainesville that often goes unnoticed the University of Florida extends its deepest gratitude to the bus drivers of the Regional Transport System; and,

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, we not only recognize the efforts and hard work of every one of our Regional Transport System drivers but also the important role of RTS in our community dependent on the drivers that make it possible.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to City of Gainesville Regional Transport Transit Director Jesus Gomez, Business Service Manager Kimberly Sweigard, Transit Operations Manager, Roy Darnold, Assistant Transit Operations Manager Helen Harris, University of Florida President Ben Sasse, University of Florida Transportation and Parking Services Associate Director of Operations Ron Fuller, Student Body President Olivia Green.*

[1] <https://www.wuft.org/politics/2024-04-16/rts-turns-50-ridership-funding-and-routes-continue-in-limbo>

[2] <https://www.bankrate.com/insurance/car/cost-of-car-ownership/#:~:text=in%20any%20way,-.How%20much%20does%20it%20cost%20to%20own%20a%20car%3F,the%20average%20price%20of%20%2448%2C334.>

- [3] <https://fluidfreeride.com/blogs/news/how-much-do-electric-scooters-cost#:~:text=How%20much%20an%20electric%20scooter,scooter%20is%20between%20%24300%2D600.>
- [4] <https://www.theprosclot.com/blogs/news/how-much-should-you-spend-on-a-bike>
- [5] <https://www.go-rts.com/files/jobs/HR.pdf>
- [6] [https://go-rts.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-Spring\\_RTS\\_Schedule-WEB-002.pdf](https://go-rts.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-Spring_RTS_Schedule-WEB-002.pdf)
- [7] <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/gainesvillecityflorida/PST045223#PST045223>
- [8] <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-read/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/#:~:text=Americans%20who%20are%20lower%2Dincome,Pew%20Research%20Center%20data%20s how.>
- [9] <https://news.ohsu.edu/2018/02/26/preventing-stress-weight-related-conditions-among-bus-drivers#:~:text=%22Operating%20a%20bus%20is%20hard,where%20they%20need%20to%20go.>
- [10] <https://www.dimensions.com/element/city-transit-buses>
- [11] <https://www.apta.com/news-publications/public-transportation-facts/>



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Monish Vijayaraghavan  
Senate President

4/25/24

Date