

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1725

TITLE: Resolution in Support of Diwali

AUTHOR(S): Senator Anusha Chaudhary, Senator Austin Britton, Senator Donal Bissainte

SPONSOR(S): Senator Lucas Nadeau, Senator Anjali Natarajan, Senator President Pro-Tempore Julia Seifer, Senator Anjani Sharma, Majority Party Leader Maya Idiculla, Senator David Favors, Senator Anjali Sethi, Senator Ama Sakrani, Senator Kate McNamara, Senator Priya Majethia, Information & Communications Chairwoman Krystal Felix, Senator David Stevens, Budget and Appropriations Chairwoman Aditi Sarkar, Senator Jake Runyon, Senator Gabriela Prieto, Senator Ella Furman, Member at Large Mia Filoramo, Senator Rasika Sriram, Judiciary Chairman Aaron Rubaii, Judiciary Vice-Chair Aleah Henley, Senator Matthew Bravo

WHEREAS, Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a significant cultural and religious holiday celebrated by millions globally, particularly within Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist communities [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Diwali embodies the universal values of hope, renewal, and inner peace by symbolizing the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil, resonating with people across diverse backgrounds and beliefs [1,2]; and,

WHEREAS, Diwali celebrations include lighting of lamps or diyas, sharing of sweets and meals with loved ones, religious ceremonies, and community gatherings, which foster unity, cultural diversity, and mutual respect [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida hosts over 6,000 international students, with India being one of the top contributing countries to the student population, reflecting the university's commitment to global diversity and multicultural representation [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida International Center (UFIC) recognizes Diwali as India's biggest and most important holiday of the year [5]; and,

WHEREAS, UFIC called the students to celebrate and learn the significance of Diwali holiday [5]; and,

WHEREAS, recognizing Diwali on campus would further UF’s dedication to promoting an inclusive environment that values cultural diversity and supports its international and multicultural communities; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate formally supports Diwali as an annual cultural observance, promoting awareness of its cultural and spiritual significance across campus; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages student organizations and campus departments to host educational events and celebrations during the week of Diwali, including cultural performances, informative panels, and traditional arts and crafts activities to enhance cultural understanding and engagement; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate supports providing designated spaces and resources for religious and cultural gatherings associated with Diwali, including space for the traditional lighting of diyas and prayer ceremonies, accommodating students’ cultural and spiritual needs; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate supports promotion of Diwali-related events and educational content through its official channels, including emails, social media, and campus newsletters, to broaden awareness and encourage participation among the entire campus community; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate celebrates the values of community, kindness, and resilience exemplified by Diwali, inviting all members of the campus community to participate in or learn about this culturally rich observance.

Proviso: *A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the University Interim President Kent Fuchs, the Dean of Students Chris Summerlin, the President of Indian Student Association Tej Patel, President of Indian Graduate Student Association Ashish Anand, and the Director of University of Florida International Center Marta Wayne.*

1. <https://www.history.com/news/the-ancient-origins-of-indias-biggest-holiday>
2. <https://www.brandeis.edu/spiritual-life/resources/guide-to-observances/diwali.html#:~:text=Diwali%20projects%20the%20rich%20and,the%20underlying%20reality%20of%20things>.
3. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/diwali-history-customs-indian-festival-of-lights>
4. <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/top-30-countries-international-students-enrollment#:~:text=China:%201986%20India:%201797%20South,amCharts>
5. <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/diwali-celebration>



Blake Cox
Senate President

11/14/24

Date