

**STUDENT SENATE BILL 2025-1044**

**TITLE: Resolution Commemorating the Festival of Pongal at the University of Florida**

**AUTHORS: Majority Party Leader Maya Idiculla**

**SPONSORS: Budget and Appropriations Chairwoman Aditi Sarkar, Senator Rasika Sriram, Indian Students Association Treasurer Johanna Monecy, Senator Anjali Sethi, Deputy Majority Party Leader Rafeh Khan**

**WHEREAS**, Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by the Tamil community. It is a celebration to thank the Sun, mother nature and the various farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful harvest. This event is celebrated over four days and marks the beginning of the Tamil month of Thai [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, Pongal holds deep cultural and spiritual significance in Tamil culture, bringing families together to partake in traditional activities such as the preparation of Pongal. Pongal is the name of the dish made and eaten during the festival. It is a mixture of boiled sweet rice and derived from the Tamil word Pongu, which means to “boil over” [2]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the festival is celebrated over three or four days with Bhoji, Thai Pongal, Mattu Pongal, and Kanum Pongal, beginning on the last day of the Tamil calendar month of Margazhi. The beginning date typically falls on January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of the English calendar. On this day all the old items are discarded and thrown away. The second day begins with the boiling of fresh milk to an extent that crosses the boundary of the vessel. The third day witnesses the hosting of a violent bull taming contest that is more commonly referred to as Jallikattu. On the last day individuals go on family picnics, eat sugarcanes, and decorate their homes with beautiful Kolams [3]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Indian Students Association at the University of the University of Florida, in recognition of the importance of cultural celebrations for South Indians, organized their first ever Pongal event on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to provide students the opportunity to celebrate this festival on campus, fostering a sense of belonging and pride in the South Indian community; and,

**WHEREAS**, this celebration is another historic moment for South Indians, along with the first Onam put on a couple months prior, reflecting the growing inclusivity within the campus community of ISA and creating a platform for cultural exchange among all students; then,

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate commemorates the inaugural celebration of Pongal on campus.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the Indian Students Association for its efforts in organizing another important cultural event for South Indians and providing a meaningful opportunity for the Tamil community to celebrate their heritage with the broader University community.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the Co-Presidents of Indian Students Association Ansh Parikh and Tej Patel and the Co-Presidents of Asian American Student Union Julia Guerreo and Amy Guo*

[1] <https://www.indianheritage.gov.sg/pongalo-pongal/what-is-pongal.html>

[2] <http://www.thecolorsofindia.com/pongal/four-days-of-pongal.html>

[3] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/festivals/pongal-2024-four-days-of-pongal-all-the-rituals-of-the-harvest-festival-you-want-to-know-in-detail-101705217504126.html>