

By Senator Flores

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Senate Resolution

A resolution congratulating the Florida International University Golden Panthers football team on achieving its first Sun Belt Conference championship title and first-ever bowl game win at the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl.

WHEREAS, since 1965, Florida International University has been Miami-Dade County's public university, currently serving more than 41,000 students, and

WHEREAS, more than 100,000 FIU graduates live and work in South Florida, and

WHEREAS, the FIU football program was established in 1999 and had its inaugural season in 2002 in Division I-AA, and

WHEREAS, the FIU Golden Panthers moved to Division I-A in 2005, joining the Sun Belt Conference, and

WHEREAS, on November 27, 2010, during its eighth season, the FIU football team for the first time won the Sun Belt Conference championship title with a 31-24 victory over the Arkansas State Red Wolves at FIU Stadium, and

WHEREAS, on December 26, 2010, in its first-ever bowl appearance, the FIU football team played in front of a national audience in the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl at Ford Field in Detroit, Michigan, and

WHEREAS, FIU won the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl with a 34-32 victory against the University of Toledo, and

WHEREAS, FIU wide receiver Eugene "T.Y." Hilton was named the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl Most Valuable Player, after he posted three catches for 32 yards and a touchdown and an 89-yard

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30 kickoff return for a touchdown and was instrumental on a 4th-
31 and-17 conversion that eventually set up the game-winning field
32 goal, and

33 WHEREAS, kicker Jack Griffin connected on a 34-yard field
34 goal as time expired to clinch the victory for the FIU Golden
35 Panthers, and

36 WHEREAS, FIU football team members Marquis Rolle, Willis
37 Wright, Junior Mertile, Larvez Mars, Eugene "T.Y." Hilton, Wayne
38 Times, Jeremiah Harden, Solomon Smith, Anthony Gaitor, Khambrel
39 McGee, Kedrick Rhodes, Glenn Coleman, Ashlyn Parker, Jake
40 Medlock, Wesley Carroll, Toronto Smith, Wayne Younger, Colt
41 Anderson, Franklin Brown, Dudley LaPorte, Kreg Brown, Randy
42 Williams, Chuck Grace, Markeith Russell, Terrance Taylor,
43 Emmanuel Souarin, Jonathan Cyprien, Darian Mallary, Jose
44 Cheeseborough, Darriet Perry, Dezariah Johnson, Jonathan
45 Faucher, Jarvis Wilson, Justin Halley, Cain Elliot, Zach
46 Schaubaut, Robert Boswell, Winston Fraser, Trenard Turner,
47 Brandon Bennett, Jarrell McGee, Derrick Jones, Jr., Jack
48 Griffin, Sam Miller, Josh Brisk, Kenneth Dillard, Torrence
49 Seymour, Caleb Vincent, Antwoine Bell, Jeremy Jermin, Aaron
50 Davis, Michael Davies, Sam Gervais, Kasey Smith, Junior Delpe,
51 Dylan Lynch, David Delsoin, Anton Graham, Nick Thorstenson,
52 Giancarlo Revilla, Rupert Bryan, Jr., Gregory Hickman, Michael
53 Cal, Dereck Wimberly, Jr., Kenneth White, Donald Senat,
54 Christopher Edwards, Curtis Bryant, Chris Nasiff, Mitch
55 MacClugage, David Istanich, Kevin Van Kirk, Austin Tottle,
56 Caylin Hauptmann, Ceedrick Davis, Stephen Bailey, Chris Cawthon,
57 Andre Pound, Brad Serini, Cedric Mack, James Wiggins, Ty
58 Frierson, Jairus Williams, Greg Ellingson, Ariel Martinez,

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59 Michael Curry, Mitch Wozniak, Joey Harris, Mike Jean-Louis,
60 Jacob Younger, Rockey Vann, Jordan White, Paul Crawford, Andrew
61 Mattox, James Jones, Joshua Forney, Tourek Williams, Jerrico
62 Lee, and Isame Faciane, contributed extraordinary performances
63 throughout the regular season and the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl,
64 and

65 WHEREAS, although the FIU football team lost Number 19,
66 Kendall Berry, in March 2010 in a tragic incident that caused
67 his untimely death, his spirit was very much present with the
68 team throughout the season, and

69 WHEREAS, FIU Head Coach Mario Cristobal, who provided
70 strong, wise leadership and instilled a solid work ethic in the
71 football team, was named the Sun Belt Conference Coach of the
72 Year, and

73 WHEREAS, Coach Cristobal has been commended by the National
74 Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for "the improved
75 academic performance of the football team since the arrival of
76 (Coach Cristobal) in December 2006," the team's 74-point
77 increase in the all-important Academic Progress Rate, and

78 WHEREAS, the FIU coaching and support staff, which includes
79 Athletic Director Pete Garcia, Defensive Coordinator Geoff
80 Collins, Offensive Coordinator Scott Satterfield, Cedric
81 Calhoun, Greg Laffere, Alex Mirabal, Juan Navarro, Frank Ponce,
82 Jeff Popovich, Apollo Wright, Phil Ockinga, Roderick Moore,
83 Dennis Smith, Tony Egues, Dan Hernandez, Jared Brookman, and
84 Andrew Green, exhibited exemplary leadership and guidance to the
85 team, NOW, THEREFORE,

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87 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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That the Florida Senate congratulates the FIU football team for its first-ever bowl game victory in the 2010 Little Caesars Pizza Bowl and for its outstanding performance during the 2010 season, which included the Sun Belt Conference championship.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate recognizes and praises the achievements of the FIU Golden Panthers football players, coaches, and staff, whose hard work, dedication, and resiliency proved instrumental throughout the season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Senate commends the entire FIU community of students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, friends, and loyal fans in South Florida and beyond for its spirit and dedication.