

By Senator Bullard

39-02067-16

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing the importance of ensuring that the students of this state have access to debt-free higher education at public colleges and universities.

WHEREAS, the economic competitiveness of this state and this nation in the global economy requires a well-educated workforce, and

WHEREAS, in 2014, students in this state on average had nearly \$25,000 in debt from federal and private loans upon graduation from public and nonprofit colleges, which significantly hinders their ability to participate in the local economy, and

WHEREAS, young people in this state should have the same opportunity offered to those who went to college in previous generations, including the ability to attend state colleges and universities without taking on burdensome debt, and

WHEREAS, in 2015, higher education is more important than ever because it is an essential step to entering and remaining in the middle class, and

WHEREAS, because of the importance of higher education, the federal, state, and local governments should extend the opportunity to pursue and attain higher education to more people than were afforded that opportunity in the past, and

WHEREAS, public investment in higher education pays off, as evidenced by the fact that the G.I. Bill resulted in a 7-to-1 return on investment for our national economy and the fact that workers with college degrees earn more money, pay more taxes, and rely less on government services, and

WHEREAS, student loan debt saddles the students who most depend on the power of a college degree to level the economic

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33 playing field with a burden that constrains career choices,
34 adversely affects students' credit ratings, prevents people from
35 fully participating in the economy by purchasing goods and
36 services, and threatens essential milestones of the American
37 dream, including the purchase of a home or a car, starting a
38 family, and saving for retirement, and

39 WHEREAS, legislative resolutions have been introduced at
40 the national level which are raising the national dialogue
41 around funding for higher education, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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45 That the importance of ensuring that the students of this
46 state have access to debt-free higher education at public
47 colleges and universities is recognized.