

By Senator Burgess

23-03364-25

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Senate Resolution

A resolution commending the University of South Florida for its achievements as a national leader in academic and research excellence and designating April 15, 2025, as "USF Day" at the Capitol.

WHEREAS, in 1956, the Tampa campus of the University of South Florida (USF) was founded with the approved name of "University of South Florida," in part, because it was the southernmost state university in Florida at the time, and

WHEREAS, now, in 2025, the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus is celebrating 50 years of serving the communities of Manatee and Sarasota Counties, and

WHEREAS, USF St. Petersburg, situated on 52 waterfront acres in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg, hosts the state's repository for human trafficking data, an important tool in assisting law enforcement with fighting this crime, and

WHEREAS, in addition to collecting and analyzing statewide data, USF's Trafficking in Persons Risk to Resilience Research Lab is tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of state-funded initiatives to combat human trafficking and working with law enforcement and state agencies to report data on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions, and

WHEREAS, USF Health has tripled its research funding over the last decade, with seven academic departments ranked among the top 50 in the nation in funding from the National Institutes of Health as the university continues to move forward on a bold path of innovation and exploration, and

WHEREAS, USF is recognized as the fifth-youngest

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30 institution welcomed into the Association of American
31 Universities and one of only two institutions in the State
32 University System to have membership, and

33 WHEREAS, USF has been recognized as a preeminent university
34 by the State of Florida, and

35 WHEREAS, USF ranks 45th among U.S. public institutions,
36 marking the 11th consecutive year it has been ranked in the top
37 50, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* annual ranking of
38 best colleges, and

39 WHEREAS, USF achieved a record-breaking \$738 million in
40 research funding during fiscal year 2024, up nearly 7 percent
41 over the previous year and an impressive increase of 35 percent
42 since 2022, and

43 WHEREAS, USF has a total annual economic impact of \$6.01
44 billion and supports 68,704 jobs in this state, and

45 WHEREAS, USF was ranked by the *Princeton Review* as a top 50
46 best value college among public institutions for providing
47 students with high-quality education and career readiness at an
48 affordable cost, and was ranked among the best in the *U.S. News
49 & World Report* Online Education Program rankings, with
50 education, engineering, and business programs in the top 100 and
51 the online MBA program in the top 25, and

52 WHEREAS, the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine is the
53 top-ranked medical school in this state and is one of only 16
54 nationally, and the only one in this state, to be placed in *U.S.
55 News & World Report's* highest tier of medical schools, and

56 WHEREAS, USF's 2024-2025 freshman class welcomed
57 approximately 6,700 students across all three campuses, a 14
58 percent increase from last year, and the new class entered USF

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59 with an impressive academic profile, including an average high
60 school GPA of 4.23, ACT score of 28.2, and SAT score of 1306,
61 and came from across the state of Florida, all 50 states, and 73
62 countries, and included approximately 750 students that joined
63 the Judy Genshaft Honors College and 54 National Merit Scholars,
64 and

65 WHEREAS, USF was ranked among the top 100 schools by *U.S.*
66 *News & World Report* for best colleges for veterans, and the
67 university earned a Collegiate Purple Star Campus designation in
68 2024, which recognizes higher education institutions that
69 provide critical support to military-connected students and
70 families, and is one of only 18 universities in the nation
71 selected as a Tillman Partnership University of the Pat Tillman
72 Foundation, based on innovative veteran-specific support
73 services and proven culture of community for military families,
74 and

75 WHEREAS, USF takes pride in its vast network of nearly
76 400,000 alumni who are creating meaningful impacts in their
77 communities throughout Florida and beyond, exemplifying the
78 university's dedication to cultivating graduates who lead with
79 purpose and serve with distinction, and

80 WHEREAS, that same pride and purpose has led USF to new
81 heights in sports, with the football team earning the record for
82 the largest shutout victory in bowl history with a 45-0 win
83 against Syracuse in the 2023 Boca Raton Bowl, and in 2024,
84 claiming victory over the San Jose State Spartans in a five-
85 overtime thriller at the Hawaii Bowl, the longest game in bowl
86 history at the time, making USF one of only 15 teams in college
87 football to win back-to-back bowl games, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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91 That April 15, 2025, is designated "USF Day" at the Capitol
92 in recognition of the University of South Florida's contribution
93 as an exceptional institution of higher education.

94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
95 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Rhea F. Law,
96 J.D., the eighth President of University of South Florida, as a
97 tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.