

The 39th Session of the Student Body Senate

Florida International University

Miami, Florida

S.R. 03 013

Protecting Our Panthers Act (POP Act)

IN THE SENATE

January 30, 2023

CASE Senator Delano Cicconi, Business Senator Matthew Gaynor, Business Senator Ian Lares-Chacin, Business Senator Martyna Reiban, Upper Division Senator Nathalie Jusino, CASE Senator Nicolas Marquez, Former Honors Senator Cassandra Soriano and CARTA Senator Isabel Quintanilla introduced the following resolution, which was presented on the Senate floor

A RESOLUTION

To recommend Florida International University's Board of Trustees to reconsider that students and faculty should be permitted to carry pepper spray freely around campus, for the purpose of self-defense, and to increase the amount of blue lights and security cameras at MMC and BBC.

Be it enacted by the Senate of the Student Body at Florida International University assembled,



Delano Cicconi

Whereas, the following content within this resolution involves imperative issues surrounding safety and contains sensitive language; It's important to approach the contents with care and respect towards all parties involved;

Whereas, the first clause of section z of the FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code states that “non-lethal weapons” are pepper spray, personal tasers, and kubatons;”¹

Whereas, the FIU Annual Security and Fire Safety Report stated that at the Modesto Maidique Campus in 2019, 19 people were raped, 11 people were fondled, and 17 people were stalked, and 1 additional person was stalked at the Biscayne Bay Campus;²

Whereas, the FIU Annual Security and Fire Safety Report stated that at the Modesto Maidique Campus in 2020, 3 people were raped and 11 people were stalked;²

Whereas, the FIU Annual Security and Fire Safety Report stated that at the Modesto Maidique Campus in 2021, 6 people were raped, 7 people were fondled, and 14 people were stalked, and 2 additional people were stalked at the Biscayne Bay Campus;²

Whereas, students should have the right to carry pepper spray, which have been sold inside multiple campus stores, including but not limited to the MMC Recharge center and the MMC Barnes and Nobles;

Whereas, The line that prohibits carrying "any dangerous chemical or biological agents"¹ needs to be carefully defined to reflect the appropriate use of self-defense tools, such as pepper spray. While it is important to prioritize safety and prevent the misuse of harmful substances, we must also recognize that certain items, when used responsibly, can provide individuals with a means of protection and peace of mind. Therefore, we suggest that this line be revised to account for the legal and permissible use of non-lethal self-defense tools, in a way that aligns with the principles of public safety and individual rights.

Whereas, Given the recent addition of a blue light near Modesto Maidique Campus's Housing Quad, we believe that the implementation of blue lights around campus should continue as a means of enhancing safety and security. In particular, we recommend that more of these lights be added to the Biscayne Bay Campus Housing Quad, where they can serve as a visible and accessible safety measure for students and staff. By investing in such initiatives, we can ensure that our campuses remain safe and welcoming environments for all, and that everyone feels supported and protected in their daily activities.

Whereas, FIU students who commute and live at the Biscayne Bay Campus should feel safe and secure; additional security cameras and the permittance to let students carry with them pepper spray would create more security;

Whereas, many students feel like sitting ducks on campus especially because many security protocols are outdated and security seems underfunded on campus;

Whereas, The Student Government Association at FIU strongly urges the Board of Trustees to revise the governing documents to permit students to carry pepper spray on campus without fear of disciplinary action, such as suspension, expulsion, or other forms of punishment. We believe that students should have the right to protect themselves in a manner that is both safe and legal, and that the use of non-lethal self-defense tools like pepper spray can play a critical role in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. By adopting a more permissive stance towards pepper spray and other self-defense items, we can empower students to take responsibility for their own safety and provide them with a greater sense of security and peace of mind while on campus.

Whereas, we encourage all FIU students and faculty to participate in the already existing self-defense programs offered by the FIU Police Department;

Whereas, feeling safe on campus should be a priority for many departments, such as FIU Health, FIU Police Department, FIU Student Government Association, FIU Healthy Living Program, and FIU Emergency Management,

Whereas, punishing a student who only wants to protect themselves from danger, is counter intuitive to maintaining a safe and healthy campus,

Whereas, the FIU Guardian app is a widely unknown and underutilized resource that provides tools to connect users with FIU's safety network, such as a panic button, safety timer, FIU PD hotline, and safety profile, to send critical information to law enforcement officials in times of danger;

Whereas, the FIU Guardian app must be accessed by downloading the Rave Guardian app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store; then, the student must log into the app with their FIU credentials in order to utilize the safety functionality of the app, which acts as an "emergency call box in every student's pocket";

Whereas, FIU Panthers Care bystander intervention training program, Step Up, is designed to encourage intervention and promote the practice of being an active bystander. Any student, staff, or faculty member is eligible to request a workshop. These workshops address issues that include but are not limited to Sexual Violence and Relationship violence. The 60-minute program's curriculum will also include concepts, such as the 5 Decision Making Steps and the Safe, Early, Effective, Kind Model;

Whereas, This bill aims to improve student safety by implementing proactive measures, including the development of safe and empowering reporting systems for victims of crimes within the FIU Police Department. These systems will provide support and collaboration with the Victim Empowerment Program (VEP)."

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Student Body that the Board of Trustees should consider altering the language of the FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code in order to reflect that students have the right to defend themselves from imminent harm and carry basic self-defense devices;

Now, Therefore, Be It Further Resolved by the Senate of the Student Body that the Board of Trustees should also consider adding more blue lights around FIU 's Modesto Maidique Campus and Biscayne Bay Campus.

1. Additionally urge the promotion of FIU resources that are created to ensure student safety, such as police escorts, as well as the FIU Guardian App, along with any future iterations of the FIU Guardian App;
 - a. Recommends that Orientation & Family Programs (OFP) promote the FIU Guardian App at least once in all of its events and programming.
 - b. Recommends that all students be informed through OFP programming, as well as through emails sent every semester, that they may request a police escort to and from any place on campus at any time, by calling FIU PD at 305-348-2626;
2. Urges the University Police Department to promote the Victim Empowerment Program to students;

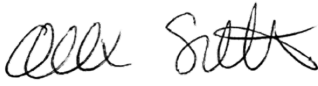

Now, Therefore, Be it Further Resolved by the Senate of the Student Body that in order to effectively protect our panthers, the FIU Police Department and Executive Administration must take institutional-level actions to address rape and sexual assault on campus. This includes enhancing on-campus policies, conducting thorough investigations, holding perpetrators accountable, and removing them from FIU campuses. Additionally, the university must provide support to survivors throughout the reporting and healing process, and increase awareness of response and ongoing support options such as the Victim Empowerment Program (VEP).

Sources:

1. https://acs.fiu.edu/initiatives/success-courses/student_conduct_and_honor_code.pdf
2. https://police.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/09/2022_FIU_Annual_Security_and_Fire_Safety_Report.pdf

Senate Resolution Transmission Form

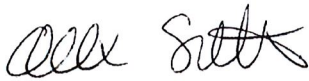
This resolution is presented by the Senate of the Student Body at Florida International University. It is presented by the Senate President Pro-Tempore and affixed with the signature of the Senate President. Both the Senate President and the Senate President Pro-Tempore affirm that the information presented below is accurate and that the resolution has successfully passed in the Senate of the Student Body. The resolution is presented on this day and at this hour for signature or veto.

<i>SR 03 013</i>			
Date Introduced:	<i>02/24/2023</i>		
Committees Assigned:	(1) Student Life and Academic Concerns (2) Rules and Administration Committee		
Vote in Committee 1: <i>02/24/2023</i>	4 <i>For</i>	0 <i>Against</i>	0 <i>Abstaining</i>
Vote in Committee 2: <i>02/14/0000</i>	5 <i>For</i>	0 <i>Against</i>	0 <i>Abstaining</i>
Vote on the Senate Floor: <i>04/10/2023</i>	26 <i>For</i>	0 <i>Against</i>	2 <i>Abstaining</i>
 <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/>	 <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/>		
Signature of the Senate President	Signature of the Senate President Pro Tempore		

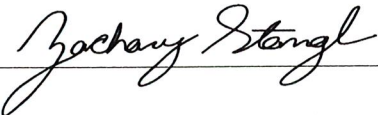
Presidential Signature of a Senate Resolution

On this day, at this time, and in this place, the Senate of the Student Body at Florida International University does hereby present this resolution to the desk of the President of the Student Body for signature or veto. The Senate has passed this resolution and all its accompaniments, in accordance with the Constitution and Statutes of the Student Government Association at Florida International University. It is presented in good faith, whereas the officers of the Senate have affixed their signatures to affirm that the resolution has followed due procedure and is valid. The Senate will await your decision.

SR 03 013



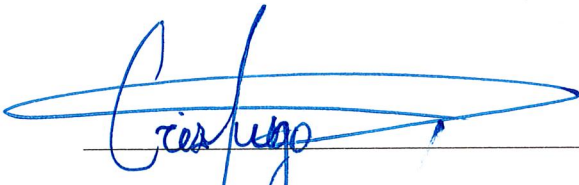
Alexander P. Sutton, Senate President



Zachary Stangl, Senate President Pro-Tempore



Fernando Melara, Senate Floor Leader



Cristhofer Lugo, Student Body President



Approved

Vetoed