

2022 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH. Recognizes Tuesday, May 24, 2022, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the Capitol.

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Tuesday, May 24, 2022, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the Capitol.

WHEREAS, Louisiana is proud to be home to eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Dillard University, Grambling State University, Southern University and A&M College, Southern University Agriculture Research and Extension Center, Southern University Law Center, Southern University at New Orleans, Southern University Shreveport, and Xavier University of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is also home to the nation's only HBCU System (Southern University System) which is uniquely positioned as an exemplar of successful HBCU policies and practices; and

WHEREAS, it would be remiss not to recognize the contributions to Louisiana's HBCU prowess upon the retirement of two of its notable leaders; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ray Belton will retire after serving as a chief executive officer for more than twenty-one years, the first fourteen years as Chancellor of Southern University Shreveport and then seven years as President-Chancellor of the System and Southern University and A&M College, comprising thirty-five years of service to Southern University; and

1 WHEREAS, over the course of the last four years at Southern University and A&M
2 College, both retention and graduation rates have grown, the enrollment of first-time
3 freshmen has increased by an average of 15%, and resources to support campus
4 enhancements have expanded by 220 percent; and

5 WHEREAS, under Dr. Belton's leadership Southern University and A&M College
6 was recently designated as a Carnegie R2 institution with "high research activity", the
7 second-highest classification for American research universities; and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Walter Kimbrough will retire May 31, 2022, as president of Dillard
9 University after ten years of service, having also led Philander Smith College as president
10 for nearly eight years; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Kimbrough is known internationally as the legendary social media
12 "Hip Hop Prez" and recognized nationally for sharing his expertise on the value of HBCUs;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Dillard's endowment now stands at \$150 million, growing by more than
15 115% during Dr. Kimbrough's tenure, giving the 152-year-old institution one of the best-
16 funded endowments among HBCUs across the nation; and

17 WHEREAS, under Dr. Kimbrough's leadership Dillard's academic profile increased
18 with the introduction of its nursing school into the College of Nursing; and

19 WHEREAS, the university has also seen increases in its retention and graduation
20 rates since 2012; and

21 WHEREAS, Louisiana HBCUs collectively enrolled 21,168 students in 2020-2021;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, since their establishment 186 years ago, HBCUs have provided black
24 students with a powerful avenue, and for some, the only path to a college degree; and

25 WHEREAS, as Louisiana grappled with both the global COVID-19 pandemic and
26 historic national civil unrest, HBCUs have proven to be invaluable assets based on their
27 history, student experiences, and societal contributions; and

28 WHEREAS, higher education universally provides wide-ranging benefits to students,
29 including higher average lifetime wages, better career opportunities, increased job security
30 and satisfaction, and better health; and provide a considerable economic impact on their

1 communities, states, and regions; and

2 WHEREAS, HBCUs enroll and successfully graduate greater numbers of
3 low-income, first-generation, and academically under prepared college students compared
4 with non-HBCUs; and

5 WHEREAS, evidence demonstrates high levels of student-faculty engagement and
6 mentorship at HBCUs, leading to stronger student success; and

7 WHEREAS, HBCUs are credited with building the black middle class in America
8 with black graduates of HBCUs who are significantly more likely to be better off financially
9 and socially; and

10 WHEREAS, research has found that, on average, 58% of black HBCU graduates
11 strongly agree that professors at their university cared about them as individuals (compared
12 to 25% of black non-HBCU graduates); and

13 WHEREAS, black HBCU graduates are nearly twice as likely as black graduates of
14 non-HBCUs to strongly agree that their university prepared them well for life outside of
15 college (55% vs 29%); and

16 WHEREAS, the pageantry, traditions, bands, and rivalries of HBCUs are second to
17 none; and

18 WHEREAS, Louisiana's HBCUs have distinguished themselves in numerous ways,
19 both nationally and in the state as follows:

20 **Dillard University** is one of the nation's leading producers of black physicists; and

21 **Grambling University** is the leading producer of computer science graduates in the
22 state of Louisiana and the only institution to offer bachelor's degree programs in cyber
23 security and cloud computing; and

24 **Southern University and A&M College (SUBR)** is the leading producer of black
25 engineers in Louisiana whose graduates play significant, creative, and administrative roles
26 at NASA, Boeing, IBM, Entergy, and Dow Chemical, among other leading companies; and

27 **Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO)** is the only HBCU in the state to
28 offer a forensic science program; and

29 **Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA)** is the only comprehensive two-year
30 community college in north Louisiana with an aerospace technology program; and

