

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

BY SENATORS BOUDREAUX, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, PEACOCK, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, STINE, TALBOT, TARVER, WARD, WHITE AND WOMACK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is the first HBCU to launch its own CBC and THC medical marijuana lines; and

Southern University Law Center (SULC) counts 104 of its alumni as judges currently serving; and

Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) is nationally recognized for the number of black graduates who go on to complete medical school according to the 2020 report of the Medical School Association of American Medical Colleges, and with plans to open its own medical school and graduate school of health sciences, it will be the fifth HBCU medical school in the nation; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to commend Louisiana's eight Historically Black Colleges and Universities for their outstanding achievements and their numerous alumni for their contributions to their local communities, the state, and the world.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, May 24, 2022, as HBCU Day at the Capitol and does hereby especially acknowledge Louisiana's HBCUs' invaluable contributions to our residents and state.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE