

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 86

BY SENATOR FIELDS

SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH. Designates May 15, 2023, as Southern University Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To designate May 15, 2023, as "Southern University Day" at the Louisiana State Capitol and
3 hereby recognize Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, for
4 its exceptional capacity to inspire students with an unmatched sense of pride to
5 unleash their full potential; accomplishing this through a wide range of prolific
6 courses, programs, and services that sustain students beyond graduation while
7 providing new socioeconomic opportunities within an international network.

8 WHEREAS, since its inception in 1880 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Southern
9 University has flourished, expanded, and empowered every student and faculty member to
10 exceed their own potential; and

11 WHEREAS, the origins of Southern University can be traced back to a collective of
12 Black politicians led by P.B.S. Pinchback, the first black Governor of Louisiana, who
13 petitioned the state constitutional convention, advocating for the establishment of a higher
14 education institution specifically for citizens of color; and

15 WHEREAS, Southern University combines academic rigor with practical experience
16 and embraces a holistic approach to living and learning to foster the development of
17 well-rounded individuals, ensuring that each student discovers their passion and purpose;
18 and

1 WHEREAS, with the enactment of Act 87 of 1880, Southern University was
2 established as an educational institution for community learners, commencing its journey
3 by providing academic studies to a modest student body of fewer than two hundred,
4 supported by a committed faculty of less than twenty, on a seventeen-acre site located within
5 the historically significant Pontchartrain Park in eastern New Orleans, Louisiana.; and

6 WHEREAS, pursuant to the Second Morrill Act of 1890, Southern University
7 transformed into a landgrant institution with the establishment of a department of agriculture
8 and mechanics, supported by both state and federal governments; and

9 WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 188 of 1912, Southern University relocated from
10 New Orleans to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and under the guidance of Dr. J.S. Clark, expanded
11 its academic offerings to include baccalaureate degrees, while also establishing schools for
12 the blind and deaf during the 1920s; and

13 WHEREAS, following the tenure of Dr. J.S. Clark, Dr. Felton G. Clark assumed the
14 presidency in 1938, leading Southern University through a period of growth, prosperity, and
15 increased prestige, expanding the university curriculum into eight divisions and establishing
16 a law school by 1947; and

17 WHEREAS, business and engineering curricula were incorporated into Southern
18 University's curriculum, alongside the establishment of a graduate school, resulting in
19 significant growth by the 1960s that necessitated further reorganization under the leadership
20 of Dr. G. Leon Netterville; and

21 WHEREAS, in 1974, the Southern University system was structured under a unified
22 leadership with the establishment of a board of supervisors tasked with providing guidance
23 to the system and its distinct campuses; and

24 WHEREAS, during the 1980s and 1990s, Southern University experienced
25 exceptional growth by continuously improving its mission to provide quality instruction,
26 which resulted in the establishment of a nursing school, the Southern University Agricultural
27 Research Center, and significant expansion of graduate programs to all students regardless
28 of background; and

29 WHEREAS, Southern University, which began with just twelve students, five faculty
30 members, a ten thousand dollar budget, and a forward-thinking vision, has developed into

1 a prestigious academic institution that is recognized as a national treasure, consisting of five
2 Louisiana campuses: Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Southern
3 University in New Orleans, Southern University Shreveport, Southern University Law
4 Center in Baton Rouge, and Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension
5 Center in Baton Rouge, now featuring over eight hundred faculty members, a budget of more
6 than one hundred eighty million dollars, and an extensive range of associate, bachelor's,
7 master's, juris doctorate, and doctoral degree programs; and

8 WHEREAS, for individuals aspiring to make a meaningful impact on both life and
9 society, Southern University offers a wide array of courses that delve into the complexities
10 of human behavior, social dynamics, and global issues, providing students with essential
11 critical thinking skills necessary to address the intricate challenges of the modern world; and

12 WHEREAS, at Southern University, students are provided with opportunities to
13 engage in hands-on experimentation and groundbreaking research within state-of-the-art
14 laboratories equipped with cutting-edge equipment, all under the guidance and support of
15 a distinguished faculty and administrators who are leaders in their respective fields, serving
16 as a source of inspiration for students as they strive to push the boundaries of knowledge;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Southern University offers a diverse range of programs spanning from
19 fine arts to finance and literature to law, providing students with opportunities to delve into
20 the intricacies of society, social sciences, and fostering a profound appreciation for the depth
21 and richness of the human experience; and

22 WHEREAS, the entrepreneurial spirit at Southern University is nurtured through the
23 provision of mentorship programs, business incubators, and networking opportunities,
24 fostering innovation and enterprise; and

25 WHEREAS, the dynamic campuses of Southern University offer abundant options
26 for students to actively participate in extracurricular activities and join diverse interest-based
27 clubs, thereby promoting personal growth and fostering lasting friendships that extend well
28 beyond graduation; and

29 WHEREAS, Southern University takes great pride in being the esteemed home of
30 the Southern Jaguars sports programs and fan zone, where athletics flourish as deeply

1 rewarding and fulfilling pursuits, adhering to procedures and credentials, all fueled by
2 unwavering support from the entire university student body and alumni community; and

3 WHEREAS, the renowned Southern University Band, affectionately known as The
4 Human Jukebox, along with the Fabulous Dancing Dolls have revolutionized the
5 conventional standards of college bands, accumulating numerous accolades, captivating
6 parade performances, notable appearances in movies and music videos, and garnering
7 widespread online acclaim, as exemplified in the 2019 Netflix documentary, *Homecoming*;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Southern University's dedication to inclusivity and diversity is steadfast,
10 as it advocates for students from all backgrounds and fosters an environment where diverse
11 perspectives flourish; and

12 WHEREAS, under the guided leadership of Dennis J. Shields, the Southern
13 University System and Southern University A&M College continue their longstanding
14 commitment to providing quality education and cultivating capable individuals to become
15 respected leaders, emphasizing active engagement with all stakeholders, investment in the
16 institution's personnel, and a dedication to transparency and accountability.

17 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
18 does hereby designate May 15, 2023, as Southern University Day at the Senate at the
19 Louisiana State Capitol.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
21 recognize the exceptional capacity of the Southern University System and the Southern
22 University Agricultural and Mechanical College for its exceptional aptitude in motivating
23 and instilling a strong sense of pride in students, empowering them to unleash their full
24 potential, achieved through a diverse range of influential courses, programs, and services
25 that not only provide support to students beyond graduation but also open up new
26 socio-economic opportunities within an international network.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
28 Dennis J. Shields, the president of the Southern University System and chancellor of the
29 Southern University and A&M College.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Michelle B. Johnson.

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