

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 147

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES

SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH: Recognizes May 24, 2022, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Day at the state capitol

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To recognize Tuesday, May 24, 2022, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Day  
3 at the state capitol.

4 WHEREAS, Louisiana is proud to be home to eight Historically Black Colleges and  
5 Universities (HBCUs): Dillard University, Grambling State University, Southern University  
6 and A&M College, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center,  
7 Southern University Law Center, Southern University at New Orleans, Southern University  
8 at Shreveport, and Xavier University; and

9 WHEREAS, the fact that Louisiana is home to the nation's only HBCU system, the  
10 Southern University System, uniquely positions the state as an exemplar of successful  
11 HBCU policy and practice; and

12 WHEREAS, it would be remiss not to recognize the contributions to Louisiana's  
13 HBCUs made by two notable leaders, both of whom are on the verge of retirement; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Ray Belton will retire after giving more than thirty-five years of  
15 service to Southern University, including service as chancellor of Southern University at  
16 Shreveport for fourteen years and as president-chancellor of the Southern University System  
17 and Southern University and A&M College for seven years; and

18 WHEREAS, over the course of the last four years, and under the tenure of  
19 Dr. Belton, both retention and graduation rates have grown at Southern University and A&M  
20 College, and the enrollment of first-time freshman has increased by an average of 15% per  
21 year, while resources to support campus enhancements have expanded by 220%; and

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

4           WHEREAS, similarly, Dr. Walter Kimbrough will retire on May 31 as president of  
5 Dillard University after ten years of service at the school; Dr. Kimbrough also led Philander  
6 Smith College as president for nearly eight years; and

7           WHEREAS, Dr. Kimbrough is known internationally on social media as the  
8 legendary "hip hop prez", where he uses his expertise to expound on the value of HBCUs;  
9 and

10          WHEREAS, Dillard University's endowment now stands at \$105 million, having  
11 grown by more than 115% during Dr. Kimbrough's tenure, thus making the 152-year old  
12 institution one of the best-funded HBCU endowments in the nation; and

13          WHEREAS, under Dr. Kimbrough's leadership, Dillard University's academic profile  
14 has increased with the introduction of two signature programs, physics and film studies, as  
15 well as the restructuring of its nursing school into the college of nursing; and

16          WHEREAS, during Dr. Kimbrough's tenure, Dillard University has also seen  
17 increases in its retention and graduation rates; and

18          WHEREAS, in 2020-2021, Louisiana HBCU's collectively enrolled 21,168 students;  
19 and

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

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

26          WHEREAS, higher education universally provides wide-ranging benefits to students,  
27 including higher average lifetime wages, better career opportunities, increased job security  
28 and satisfaction, and better health, and exerts a considerable economic impact on  
29 communities, the state, and the region; and

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

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

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

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

12           WHEREAS, Black HBCU graduates are nearly twice as likely as Black graduates  
13 of non-HBCUs to strongly agree that their university prepared them for life outside of  
14 college; and

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

17           WHEREAS, Louisiana's HBCUs have distinguished themselves nationally and in the  
18 state of Louisiana in numerous ways such as:

19           (1) Dillard University is one of the nation's leading producers of Black physicists.

20           (2) Grambling State University is the leading producer of computer science  
21 graduates in the state of Louisiana and the only institution to offer bachelor's degree  
22 programs in cybersecurity and cloud computing.

23           (3) Southern University in Baton Rouge is a leading producer of Black engineers in  
24 Louisiana, and its graduates play significant roles at the National Aeronautics and Space  
25 Administration, Boeing, International Business Machines, Entergy, and Dow Chemical,  
26 among other leading companies; and

27           (4) Southern University at New Orleans is the only HBCU to offer a forensic science  
28 program.

29           (5) Southern University at Shreveport is the only two-year community college in  
30 North Louisiana with an aerospace technology program.

1           (6) Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is the first  
2 HBCU to launch its own CBC and THC medical marijuana lines.

3           (7) Southern University Law Center counts among its alumni 104 attorneys who are  
4 currently serving as judges.

5           (8) Xavier University has been nationally recognized by the Association of  
6 American Medical Colleges for the number of Black graduates that go on to successfully  
7 complete medical school and currently plans to open its own medical school and graduate  
8 school of health sciences, all of which would make Xavier the fifth Black medical school in  
9 the nation; and

10           WHEREAS, its is appropriate for the House of Representatives of the Legislature of  
11 Louisiana to commend the state's eight HBCUs for their outstanding contributions to local  
12 communities, the state, and the world.

13           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
14 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, May 24, 2022, as Historically  
15 Black Colleges and Universities Day at the state capitol and does hereby acknowledge the  
16 invaluable contributions these institutions have made to the state of Louisiana.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HR 147 Original

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