

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 32

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Tuesday, April 18, 2023, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day at the state 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 Agricultural 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, the Southern University System, which is uniquely positioned as an exemplar with a profound commitment to research and student success; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives would be remiss if it did not welcome two of Louisiana's HBCU presidents to the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the Southern University System welcomed new leadership in 2022, naming Dennis J. Shields as president of the system and chancellor of its flagship, Southern University and A&M College; and

WHEREAS, under president-chancellor Shields' leadership, informed by over forty years of higher education experience, each Southern University campus continues to advance, support, and promote economic, cultural, and workforce development initiatives that bring benefits beyond the borders of the great state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2023, Rochelle L. Ford, Ph.D., APR, was named the eighth president of Dillard University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ford has built a robust resume in higher education administration, research, and instruction and is recognized nationally for her work in public relations; and

WHEREAS, under President Ford's leadership, Dillard will prioritize advancing equity and opportunities through economic development with world-class education and workforce training, sustainability and innovation, improving cybersecurity, promoting safe and equitable communities, food equity, physical and mental health, and entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, since their establishment one hundred eighty-seven years ago, HBCUs have continued to build a legacy of excellence, achievement, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, in the face of discrimination against Black Americans by many institutions of higher education, HBCUs created pathways to opportunity and educational excellence for Black students throughout our nation, building America's black middle class; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's HBCUs collectively enrolled 23,071 students in 2022-2023; and

WHEREAS, HBCU graduates are exemplary public servants, scientists, doctors, artists, lawyers, judges, engineers, educators, entertainers, business owners, and leaders; and

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

WHEREAS, the legacy and history of Louisiana's HBCUs will, for the first time, be permanently installed in the Capitol Park Museum; and

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

WHEREAS, Dillard University will offer its first master of science in nursing in Fall 2023, and is recognized for its National Institute of Health Center for Minority Health and Health Equity Research, its nationally ranked mock trial program and Center for Racial Justice, and for producing distinguished alumni such as Justice Orelia Merchant, who has been nominated by President Joe Biden to serve as a United States District Court Judge for the Eastern District of New York; and

WHEREAS, Grambling State University is the leading producer of computer science graduates in the state, is the only institution to offer bachelor's degree programs in cybersecurity and cloud computing, is currently constructing the first digital library at an HBCU and on a Louisiana college campus, and consistently produces graduates in

recession-proof jobs in the fields of accounting, information technology, education, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Southern University and A&M College, a Carnegie Research 2 institution with high research activity, celebrates one hundred forty-three years of academic and social progress, serves communities through various programs, including its School of Nursing partnership with the Ochsner Health System to create the "Jag Mobile" community health unit, and produces distinguished alumni such as recent Medal of Freedom honoree Colonel Paris Davis (retired), who received the honor from President Joe Biden in March 2023; and

WHEREAS, Southern University at New Orleans will begin its bachelor of science in nursing and bachelor of science in cybersecurity programs in Fall 2023 and has taken critical steps to support community mental wellness by establishing a Grief and Trauma Center, Counseling Center, and ZEN Room on its campus; and

WHEREAS, Southern University Shreveport (SUSLA) celebrates fifty-five years of providing an accessible, excellent educational experience to students and programming for its surrounding community, has unveiled the Roy Griggs School of Business to advance SUSLA's academic and workforce priorities by helping to close gaps in the region and assist in business retention and expansion efforts, and has been approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents to offer more than ten new academic programs; and

WHEREAS, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center has established the Mobile Education & Technology Center to travel across the state of Louisiana to bring internet access, hands-on testing, and live instruction to the most marginalized areas and remote corners of the state, and the related College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Science hosts the environmental toxicology Ph.D. program, the only program of its kind in Louisiana, offering four areas of specialization in chemical and biochemical toxicology: cellular and molecular biology, developmental biology, material science, and bioinformatics; and

WHEREAS, Southern University Law Center is celebrating seventy-five years of opening doors for legal professionals; under the leadership of Chancellor John K. Pierre, the Law Center continues to thrive as a progressive and transformational legal education

institution that provides access and opportunity to its students and community through innovative programming and experiential learning; and

WHEREAS, Xavier University of Louisiana was recognized as the most successful HBCU for upward mobility and third in the nation for economic return on investment in 2022 and recently announced its plans to establish a College of Medicine with Ochsner Health System, which will be the fifth HBCU medical school in the nation.

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Tuesday, April 18, 2023, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Day at the state capitol and does hereby acknowledge Louisiana's HBCUs for their invaluable contributions to our residents and state.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES