

February 27, 2021

As Student Body Presidents of Utah's higher educational institutions, we stand with the students, alumni, administration, and trustees of Dixie State University in their support for House Bill 0278 which requests a name change of their university.

We understand some Utahns might associate Dixie with a positive local meaning. However, outside of Utah, people are far more familiar with Dixie's negative connotation. In a vast majority of the U.S. Dixie is related to slavery and the confederacy. This further causes students and alumni challenges in potential job prospects and careers, especially outside our great state of Utah. No amount of marketing Dixie State University implements can outpace Dixie's negative association in our day and age. Students and alumni alike should be able to proudly carry the name of their university all over the country. Unfortunately, many students and alumni of Dixie State have clearly expressed that their university's name is often the central focus of the conversation.

This will not be the first or last name change of a higher education institution in our state. Most degree-granting universities in Utah have already undergone multiple name changes. In Dixie State's case, some believe the university's efforts to adapt by implementing a name change is acquiescing to popular demand. However, we firmly believe the benefits from a name change far outweigh the temporary growing pains the university and community will experience.

We urge Utah lawmakers to vote in favor of House Bill 0278—sending a message to the rest of the United States that Utah welcomes and embraces all.

Signed,

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Matthew Griffin, Student Body President, Snow College

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