CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN

Congressional Resolution

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 129

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance and value of education in United States history.

(Passed unanimously by the Senate on June 30, 2000.
Passed unanimously by the House of Representatives on July 10, 2000.)

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

June 30, 2000

Mr. Liberman (for himself, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Smith of Oregon, Mr. Cusack, Mr. Byers, Mr. Concord, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Cramps) submitted the following concurrent resolution, which was considered and agreed to:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance and value of education in United States history.

Whereas basic knowledge of United States history is essential to full and informed participation in civic life and to the larger vitality of the American experiment in self-government;

Whereas basic knowledge of the past serves as a civic glue, binding together a diverse people into a single Nation with a common purpose;

We the People: A Resource Guide to Promoting Historical Literacy
Whereas citizens who lack knowledge of United States history will also lack an understanding and appreciation of the democratic principles that define and sustain the Nation as a free people, such as liberty, justice, tolerance, government by the consent of the governed, and equality under the law;

Whereas a recent Roper survey done for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni reveals that the next generation of American leaders and citizens is in danger of losing America's civic memory;

Whereas the Roper survey found that 81 percent of seniors at elite colleges and universities could not answer basic high school level questions concerning United States history, that scarcely more than half knew general information about American democracy and the Constitution, and that only 22 percent could identify the source of the most famous line of the Gettysburg Address;

Whereas many of the Nation's colleges and universities no longer require United States history as a prerequisite to graduation, including 100 percent of the top institutions of higher education;

Whereas 78 percent of the Nation's top colleges and universities no longer require the study of any form of history;

Whereas America's colleges and universities are leading bellwethers of national priorities and values, setting standards for the whole of the United States' education system and sending signals to students, teachers, parents, and public schools about what every educated citizen in a democracy must know;

Whereas many of America's most distinguished historians and intellectuals have expressed alarm about the growing historical illiteracy of college and university graduates and the consequences for the Nation, and

Whereas the distinguished historians and intellectuals fear that without a common civic memory and a common understanding of the remarkable individuals, events, and ideas that have shaped the Nation, people in the United States risk losing much of what it means to be an American, as well as the ability to fulfill the fundamental responsibilities of citizens in a democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Whereas citizens who lack knowledge of United States history will also lack an understanding and appreciation of the democratic principles that define and sustain the Nation as a free people, such as liberty, justice, tolerance, government by the consent of the governed, and equality under the law;

Whereas a recent Roper survey done for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni reveals that the next generation of American leaders and citizens is in danger of losing America's civic memory;

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Whereas many of America's most distinguished historians and intellectuals have expressed alarm about the growing historical illiteracy of college and university graduates and the consequences for the Nation, and

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Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is
the sense of Congress that—

(1) the historical illiteracy of America's college and university graduates
is a serious problem that should be addressed by the Nation's higher education
community;

(2) boards of trustees and administrators at institutions of higher
education in the United States should review their curricula and add
requirements in United States history;

(3) State officials responsible for higher education should review public
college and university curricula in their States and promote requirements in
United States history;

(4) parents should encourage their children to select institutions of
higher education with substantial history requirements and students should
take courses in United States history whether required or not; and

(5) history teachers and educators at all levels should redouble their
efforts to bolster the knowledge of United States history among students of all
ages and to restore the vitality of America's civic memory.

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is
the sense of Congress that—

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efforts to bolster the knowledge of United States history among students of all
ages and to restore the vitality of America's civic memory.
The United States government has been a crucial player in promoting historical literacy. The National Park Service, the Department of Education, and the Library of Congress, among others, have played significant roles in this effort. In addition to these federal agencies, states and localities have also been actively involved in promoting historical literacy. For example, some states have established historical education standards, while others have implemented programs to increase student engagement in history.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of promoting historical literacy. This is because a well-informed citizenry is essential for a functioning democracy. A lack of historical knowledge can lead to misunderstanding of current events and policies. It can also contribute to the propagation of misinformation and the spread of conspiracy theories.

To address this issue, there has been a push for greater engagement in history education. This has included the development of new teaching methods and the use of technology to make history more accessible and engaging. It has also involved efforts to improve the quality of history education at all levels, from elementary school to college.

In conclusion, promoting historical literacy is essential for a healthy democracy. By providing accurate and engaging history education, we can ensure that citizens are well-informed and able to participate fully in the democratic process. This is a goal that requires the cooperation of all levels of government, as well as the private sector and civil society. Only through collective effort can we ensure that future generations inherit a deep understanding of our past and a commitment to preserving the values of freedom and justice.
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