

107TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 451

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of teaching United States history and civics in elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

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Whereas gaining a sense of history is a gradual and cumulative process, and history education should therefore begin at the early stages of a student's classroom experience and continue to develop throughout a student's entire educational career and beyond;

Whereas when students study United States history they become familiar with the development and expansion of the

country, which enables them to better understand the present relationship between the United States and other countries and to anticipate future international interaction;

Whereas when students have a foundation of basic United States history they can better understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens of the United States and as a part of the global community;

Whereas the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) United States History Assessment of 2001 found that 89 percent of high school seniors, 84 percent of 8th graders, and 82 percent of 4th graders scored below “proficient” levels;

Whereas the results of the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment showed that 77 percent of all 4th graders sampled scored below “proficient” levels and showed similar results for 8th and 12th graders, with approximately three-fourths of students at both grade levels scoring below “proficient” levels;

Whereas the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment showed that one-third of 4th graders could not explain the meaning of “I pledge allegiance to the flag” on a multiple-choice test and a majority of 4th graders could not answer why “citizens elect people to make laws for them” in a democracy;

Whereas in 1999, the United States placed 6th in the International Civic Education (CivEd) Study, a study of 27 countries sponsored by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) designed to tap the civic knowl-

edge and skills of 14-year-olds and their attitudes toward democracy and citizenship;

Whereas according to the CivEd study, 12 percent of students in the United States reported never or hardly ever studying history in school, and the majority of 9th graders typically spent less than one hour per week doing history homework;

Whereas according to the Center for Survey Research and Analysis, fewer than half of the seniors surveyed at top universities across the United States can identify crucial events in United States history;

Whereas distinguished historians and intellectuals fear that without a common civic memory and common understanding of the remarkable individuals, events, and ideals 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; and

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, government by consent of the governed, and equality under the law: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

3 (1) recognizes the importance of teaching
4 United States history and civics in elementary and
5 secondary schools;

1 (2) expresses concern regarding the lack of
2 basic understanding of United States history among
3 students of all levels in the United States; and

4 (3) strongly supports efforts to promote the
5 value of education in United States history and to
6 ensure that students in the United States graduate
7 from high school with a significant understanding of
8 United States history and civics.

Passed the House of Representatives October 1,
2002.

Attest:

Clerk.