

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 333

Designating 2024 as the Year of Democracy as a time to reflect on the contributions of the system of Government of the United States to a more free and stable world.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating 2024 as the Year of Democracy as a time to reflect on the contributions of the system of Government of the United States to a more free and stable world.

Whereas 2,000 years after the ancient Greeks laid the groundwork for democracy, the founders of the United States built an even greater system of Government, a democratic republic, propelling the United States to become the most advanced nation in human history;

Whereas the model of Government of the United States has been reproduced around the world;

Whereas Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, respectively, described democracy as the “light that led us out of gothic darkness” and humankind’s “last best hope”;

Whereas recent life-threatening and life-altering attacks and threats against political figures and public servants speak loudly to the necessity of maintaining mutual respect and civility for the right of an opponent to advocate for or oppose policies;

Whereas the ardent pursuit of one's policies is not diminished whatsoever by the exercise of respect and civility that assures the maintenance of our democracy and freedoms;

Whereas President John F. Kennedy said, we “must remember on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness”;

Whereas, according to the 2022 Freedom House report, only about 20 percent of the global population now live in “free” countries;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, including the addition of the Reconstruction Era amendments, enshrine the rights and civil liberties of the citizens of the United States, including the right to vote in free and fair elections;

Whereas the perpetuation of the ideals of democracy does not happen on its own and can be stalled or reversed;

Whereas surveys show citizens of the United States are losing faith in the democratic system;

Whereas former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said, “The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens.”;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan said, “Democracy is worth dying for, because it's the most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man.”;

Whereas Congressman John R. Lewis said in his final words to the United States, “Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.”;

Whereas World War II demonstrated the fragility of democracy and the civilized life that accompanies democracy;

Whereas British Prime Minister Winston Churchill observed that, “Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time . . .”;

Whereas President George Washington said the United States must recognize the immense value of the National Union and work towards preservation of that Union with “jealous anxiety” and wrote that the security of a free Constitution may be accomplished by “teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights”;

Whereas President Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people . . . They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”; and

Whereas the Government of the United States must teach and educate the people by taking appropriate actions to highlight and emphasize the importance of democratic principles and civility in the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates 2024 as the “Year of Democ-

3 racy”;

1 (2) encourages States and local governments to
2 designate 2024 as the “Year of Democracy”;

3 (3) recognizes the celebration of the “Year of
4 Democracy” as a time to reflect on the contributions
5 of the system of Government of the United States to
6 a more free and stable world; and

7 (4) encourages the people of the United States
8 to observe the “Year of Democracy” with appro-
9 priate ceremonies and activities that—

10 (A) provide appreciation for the system of
11 Government of the United States;

12 (B) demonstrate that the people of the
13 United States shall never forget the sacrifices
14 made by past generations of people of the
15 United States to preserve the freedoms and
16 principles of the United States; and

17 (C) remind our citizens that those with dif-
18 fering political opinions are often their neigh-
19 bors, fellow religious congregants, and extended
20 family members with whom they share many
21 life values and can respectfully disagree.

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