

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 812

Recognizing the 179th anniversary of the arrival of pioneers belonging to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the Great Salt Lake Valley, honoring the enduring pioneer spirit that shaped the American West, and celebrating its continued relevance to the unfolding American story.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 23, 2026

Mr. CURTIS (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. CRAPO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 179th anniversary of the arrival of pioneers belonging to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the Great Salt Lake Valley, honoring the enduring pioneer spirit that shaped the American West, and celebrating its continued relevance to the unfolding American story.

Whereas the early members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (referred to in this preamble as the “Church”) sought nothing more than the freedom to worship according to the dictates of their own conscience;

Whereas, in the years following the establishment of the Church, the early members of the Church endured repeated persecution, including mob violence, the destruc-

tion of their homes and crops, the loss of their property, and forced displacement from one settlement after another;

Whereas, on June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith, the leader and prophet of the Church, was murdered by an armed mob, leaving the Church and its members facing an uncertain future;

Whereas Brigham Young, who succeeded Joseph Smith as leader of the Church, concluded that safety and religious liberty could only be found far beyond the settled United States and organized the Church's members for a journey into the wilderness of the American West;

Whereas, beginning in February 1846, thousands of Latter-day Saint pioneers set out across the frozen Iowa plains and ultimately traveled more than 1,300 miles by wagon and, for many, by foot, crossing prairies, deserts, mountains, and rivers to reach their new home;

Whereas the Latter-day Saint pioneers endured extreme cold, disease, hunger, and exhaustion during the journey, and many families buried children, parents, and spouses along the trail, their graves marking a path of sacrifice across the American West;

Whereas, upon entering the Great Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, Brigham Young declared, "This is the right place," foretelling how the valley would become home to many Latter-day Saint pioneers and their posterity;

Whereas, within days of their arrival, the Latter-day Saint pioneers laid out a city, plowed fields, irrigated the desert, and began to build homes, mills, and churches where none had stood before;

Whereas, over the following decades, tens of thousands more Latter-day Saint pioneers followed the same trail, and, together with earlier arrivals, established more than 500 communities throughout the American West, transforming the region into a place of prosperity;

Whereas the industry of the Latter-day Saint pioneers extended far beyond their own settlements, as they built roads and bridges, operated ferries across major rivers, planted way-station crops, and assisted thousands of other westward-bound emigrants who relied on the resources and goodwill the Latter-day Saint pioneers had established;

Whereas, on July 24, 1849, the Latter-day Saint pioneers held their first formal commemoration of the anniversary of their arrival, gathering for a procession and a public celebration of thanksgiving in Salt Lake City;

Whereas that observance has continued for 177 years and is now celebrated annually as “Pioneer Day,” a Utah State holiday marked by parades, rodeos, reenactments, fireworks, and civic gatherings that welcome participants of every faith and background;

Whereas the story of the Latter-day Saint pioneers is, at its core, a distinctly American story of a people who, having been denied protection and refuge, built both for themselves and for the generations who followed;

Whereas the pioneer spirit of self-reliance, enterprise, and perseverance that carried the Latter-day Saint pioneers across the plains continues today in the character of the American West, which remains a place where individuals and communities join together to solve hard problems and build for the future; and

Whereas the legacy of the Latter-day Saint pioneers stands as a lasting reminder that the American story is written not only by the founding generation, but by every generation that chooses to press forward with unconquerable faith and undaunted hope: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the 179th anniversary of the ar-
3 rival of Latter-day Saint pioneers to the Great Salt
4 Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, and the annual ob-
5 servance of “Pioneer Day” that commemorates it;

6 (2) honors the extraordinary sacrifice of the
7 Latter-day Saint pioneers, including those who gave
8 their lives along the trail, in pursuit of religious lib-
9 erty and a place to call home;

10 (3) commends the Latter-day Saint pioneers
11 and their descendants for their foundational role in
12 settling and developing the American West, and for
13 a legacy of industry, cooperation, and faith that con-
14 tinues to benefit the United States; and

15 (4) encourages all the people of the United
16 States to reflect on the enduring virtues of the Lat-
17 ter-day Saint pioneers and to carry forward, in their
18 own generation, that same spirit of resilience in the
19 continuation of the American story.

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