Public Law 99-351
99th Congress

Joint Resolution

July 2, 1986
[H.J. Res. 429]

To designate July 2, 1986, as "National Literacy Day".

Whereas literacy is a necessary tool for survival in our society;
Whereas 35 million Americans today read at a level which is less than necessary for full survival needs;
Whereas there are 25 million adults in the United States who cannot read, whose resources are left untapped, and who are unable to offer their full contribution to society;
Whereas the annual cost of illiteracy to society has been estimated at $6,000,000,000;
Whereas there is a direct correlation between the number of illiterate adults unable to perform at the standard necessary for available employment and the money allocated to child welfare cost and unemployment compensation;
Whereas, although the largest number of adult illiterates is comprised of whites, in proportion to population size in percentages the number is higher for blacks and Hispanics, resulting in more economic and social discrimination problems;
Whereas the prison population represents the single highest concentration of adult illiteracy;
Whereas 1,000,000 children between the ages of 12 and 17 cannot read above a 3rd grade level and 15 percent of recent graduates of urban high schools read at less than a 6th grade level;
Whereas 85 percent of the juveniles who appear in criminal court are functionally illiterate;
Whereas the 47 percent illiteracy rate among black youths is expected to increase to 50 percent by 1990;
Whereas one-half of the heads of households cannot read past the 8th grade level and one-third of mothers on welfare are functionally illiterate;
Whereas the Federal, State, municipal, and private literacy programs have only been able to reach 4 percent of the total illiterate population;
Whereas it is vital to call attention to the problem of illiteracy, to help others understand the severity of this problem and its detrimental effects on our society, and to reach those who are unaware of the free service and help available for illiteracy: Now, therefore, be it

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Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That July 2, 1986, is designated as "National Literacy Day". The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved July 2, 1986.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 429 (S.J. Res. 363):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 132 (1986):
June 19, considered and passed House.
June 20, S.J. Res. 363 considered and passed Senate.
June 26, H.J. Res. 429 considered and passed Senate.