Public Law 100-67
100th Congress

Joint Resolution

July 10, 1987
[H.J. Res. 181]

Commemorating the bicentennial of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

Whereas, on July 13, 1787, the Congress of the United States, which was established by the Articles of Confederation, enacted a law entitled "An Ordinance for the government of the territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio";

Whereas such law, commonly known as the Northwest Ordinance, provided civil government for and opened to settlement the Northwest Territory from which all or part of the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were subsequently formed;

Whereas the Northwest Ordinance provided that States formed in the Northwest Territory would be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, and admission into the Union on this basis was subsequently applied to States formed in other territories of the United States;

Whereas the Northwest Ordinance led to the orderly development of the Northwest Territory;

Whereas the Northwest Ordinance recognized the dignity of the individual without regard to race, religion or origin and provided for the equality of civil rights for all people by prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude in the Territory, thereby preceding the Bill of Rights;

Whereas the Northwest Ordinance encouraged public education by providing for free public education within the local community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 is hereby commemorated as one of the fundamental legal documents of the United States in that the Northwest Ordinance is an early example of the commitment of the people of the United States to democratic principles, religious freedom, and individual rights. The President of the United States is authorized

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and requested to issue a proclamation, as soon as practicable after the date of the adoption of this joint resolution, that calls upon the people of the United States to carry out appropriate ceremonies and activities commemorating the bicentennial of the Northwest Ordinance.

Approved July 10, 1987.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 181 (S.J. Res. 82):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 133 (1987):
June 10, considered and passed House.
June 26, considered and passed Senate.