Public Law 100-78
100th Congress

Joint Resolution

To designate the period commencing November 15, 1987, and ending November 21, 1987, as "Geography Awareness Week".

July 24, 1987
[S.J. Res. 88]

Whereas the United States of America is a truly unique nation with diverse landscapes, bountiful resources, a distinctive multiethnic population, and a rich cultural heritage, all of which contributes to the status of the United States as a world power;

Whereas geography is the study of people, their environments, and their resources;

Whereas, historically, geography has aided Americans in understanding the wholeness of their vast nation and the great abundance of its natural resources;

Whereas geography today offers perspectives and information in understanding ourselves, our relationship to the Earth, and our interdependence with other peoples of the world;

Whereas 20 percent of American elementary school students asked to locate the United States on a world map placed it in Brazil;

Whereas 95 percent of American college freshmen tested could not locate Vietnam on a world map;

Whereas 75 percent of Americans responding to a nationwide survey could not locate El Salvador on a map, while 63 percent could not name the two nations involved in the SALT talks;

Whereas over 20 percent of American teachers currently teaching geography have taken no classes in the subject and, therefore, do not have the training necessary to effectively teach geographic concepts;

Whereas departments of geography are being eliminated from American institutes of higher learning, thus endangering the discipline of geography in the United States;

Whereas traditional geography has virtually disappeared from the curricula of American schools while still being taught as a basic subject in other countries, including Great Britain, Canada, Japan, and the Soviet Union;

Whereas an ignorance of geography, foreign languages, and cultures places the United States at a disadvantage with other countries in matters of business, politics, and the environment;

Whereas the United States is a nation of worldwide involvements and global influence, the responsibilities of which demand an understanding of the lands, languages, and cultures of the world; and

Whereas national attention must be focused on the integral role that knowledge of world geography plays in preparing citizens of the United States for the future of an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world: 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 the period commencing November 15, 1987, and ending November 21, 1987, is designated as "Geography Awareness Week", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved July 24, 1987.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 88:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 133 (1987):
June 9, considered and passed Senate.
July 14, considered and passed House.