Public Law 98-320
98th Congress

Joint Resolution

June 18, 1984
[S.J. Res. 261]

To provide for the designation of the last week in June 1984 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week".

Whereas the anniversary of the birth of Helen Keller, the most accomplished, respected, and renowned deaf-blind American in our history, falls on June 27; and

Whereas deaf-blindness is one of the most severe of all disabilities, with respect to which some forty thousand Americans are deprived of two primary senses; and

Whereas the rubella epidemic of the 1960's, along with other pathologies, has resulted in deaf-blindness for approximately six thousand of our children; and

Whereas, because of the severity of deaf-blindness the cost of educating, training, and rehabilitating persons who are deaf and blind is high in comparison with other disabilities; and

Whereas this high cost causes many service agencies to be reluctant to serve deaf-blind persons, thus inhibiting the independence and self-sufficiency of such persons, and frequently resulting in their placement in custodial institutions; and

Whereas, although the Helen Keller National Center and its network, and regional deaf-blind centers serve a portion of this population, inadequate education, training and rehabilitation services to the deaf-blind population represents a terrible waste of human lives and resources, imposing a high economic cost on the Nation; and

Whereas it is in the national interest to prevent this waste of human resources, foster independence, create opportunities for employment, and maximize the ability to achieve among our deaf-blind citizens; and

Whereas these objectives can be accomplished only through an increased public awareness of, and attention to, the needs, abilities, and potential contributions to society of persons who are both deaf and blind; and

Whereas it is highly appropriate to publicize the needs, abilities, and potential of all deaf-blind persons, and simultaneously to recognize Helen Keller not only as a beacon of courage and hope for our Nation, but also as a symbol of what is possible for deaf-blind persons to achieve: 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 President shall issue a proclamation designating the last week in June of 1984 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week" and calling upon the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved June 18, 1984.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 261:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 130 (1984):
May 1, considered and passed Senate.
June 6, considered and passed House.