Public Law 99-78
99th Congress

Joint Resolution

To designate August 4, 1985, as "Freedom of the Press Day".

Aug. 2, 1985
[H.J. Res. 164]

Whereas, August 4, 1985, marks the two hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the court decision exonerating John Peter Zenger, a newspaper publisher charged with sedition for printing reports detailing official corruption in the colonial government of New York;

Whereas, the defense of John Peter Zenger centered on the right of people to be truthfully informed about events affecting their lives;

Whereas, the Zenger decision is honored as the first full expression in this land of the need for a free press, and the substantial role an unfettered press can and should play in the interaction of government and the public;

Whereas, the dedication of our Founding Fathers to freedom of the press was codified in the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Whereas, a free press is vital and elemental to the maintenance of an informed public capable of expressing reasoned opinions on the great issues confronting a nation; and

Whereas, it is important for the people who have benefited from unprecedented liberties and freedoms to reiterate their deepest commitment to the principles which have distinguished our national experience: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That August 4, 1985, is hereby designated "Freedom of the Press Day", and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon all public officials and the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, including the display of the flag of the United States at all appropriate places.

Approved August 2, 1985.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 164:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 131 (1985):
July 11, considered and passed House.
July 26, considered and passed Senate.

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