

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 59

Designating both July 2, 1999, and July 2, 2000, as “National Literacy Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 8, 1999

Mr. DASCHLE (for Mr. LAUTENBERG) (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. DODD, Mr. BYRD, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HELMS, Mr. KERRY, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. INOUE, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. ROBB, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. GRAMS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. MACK, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. DASCHLE, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

JULY 1, 1999

Considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating both July 2, 1999, and July 2, 2000, as
“National Literacy Day”.

Whereas 44,000,000 people living in the United States read at a level lower than is required to fully function in society and to earn a living wage;

Whereas approximately 22 percent of adults in the United States cannot read, leaving valuable resources untapped, and depriving those adults of the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to society;

Whereas people who have the lowest literacy skills are closely connected to social problems such as poverty, crime, welfare, and unemployment.

Whereas 43 percent of all adults functioning at the lowest literacy levels live in poverty;

Whereas prisons hold the highest concentration of illiterate adults, with 7 of 10 prisoners functioning at the lowest literacy levels;

Whereas the likelihood of receiving welfare assistance increases as the level of literacy decreases;

Whereas 3 of 4 food stamp recipients function at the lowest literacy levels;

Whereas millions of Americans are unable to hold a job or fully function in the workplace because they cannot read well enough to perform routine uncomplicated tasks;

Whereas almost 38 percent of African Americans and approximately 56 percent of Hispanics are illiterate, compared to only 14 percent of the Caucasian population, with such a disparity resulting in increased social and economic discrimination against those minorities;

Whereas 35 percent of older Americans operate at the lowest literacy levels, making it difficult to read basic medical instructions, thus prolonging illnesses and risking the occurrence of emergency medical conditions;

Whereas the cycle of illiteracy continues because children of illiterate parents are often illiterate themselves because of

the lack of support they receive from their home environment;

Whereas Federal, State, municipal, and private literacy programs have been able to reach fewer than 10 percent of the total illiterate population;

Whereas it is vital to call attention to the problem of illiteracy, to understand the severity of the illiteracy problem and the detrimental effects of illiteracy on our society, and to reach those who are illiterate and unaware of the free services and help available to them; and

Whereas it is necessary to recognize and thank the thousands of volunteers and organizations, like Focus on Literacy, Inc., that work to promote literacy and provide support to the millions of illiterate persons needing assistance: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates both July 2, 1999, and July 2,
3 2000, as “National Literacy Day”; and

4 (2) requests that the President issue a procla-
5 mation calling on the people of the United States to
6 observe “National Literacy Day” with appropriate
7 ceremonies and activities.

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