

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 14

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 5, 2003

Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. VOINOVICH, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the education curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Whereas the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, were carried out by 19 hijackers, including 15 Saudi Arabian nationals;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia controls and regulates all forms of education in public and private schools at all levels;

Whereas Islamic religious education is compulsory in public and private schools at all levels in Saudi Arabia;

Whereas the religious curriculum is written, monitored, and taught by followers of the Wahhabi interpretation of

Islam, the only religious doctrine that the Government of Saudi Arabia allows to be taught;

Whereas rote memorization of religious texts continues to be a central feature of much of the educational system of Saudi Arabia, leaving thousands of students unprepared to function in the global economy of the 21st century;

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia has tolerated elements within its education system that promote and encourage extremism;

Whereas some of the textbooks used in schools in Saudi Arabia foster a combination of intolerance, ignorance, and anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views;

Whereas these intolerant views make students in whom they are instilled prime recruiting targets of extremist groups;

Whereas extremism endangers the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region and threatens global security;

Whereas the events of September 11, 2001, have created an urgent need to promote moderate voices in the Islamic world as an effective way to combat extremism; and

Whereas the Government of Saudi Arabia is currently conducting a review of its education curriculum: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

3 (1) supports the review by the Government of
4 Saudi Arabia of its education curriculum;

1 (2) calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to
2 ensure that such review is thorough, objective, and
3 public;

4 (3) requests the United States Representative
5 to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and
6 Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to—

7 (A) address the issue of the educational
8 curriculum reform at the 2003 session of the
9 UNESCO General Conference; and

10 (B) encourage UNESCO to examine the
11 educational system in Saudi Arabia and mon-
12 itor the progress of the efforts to reform the
13 curriculum; and

14 (4) urges the Government of Saudi Arabia to
15 reform its education curriculum in a manner that
16 promotes tolerance, develops civil society, and en-
17 courages functionality in the global economy.

○