

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 477

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the States should enact joint custody laws for fit parents, so that more children are raised with the benefits of having a father and a mother in their lives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland (for himself and Mr. ABERCROMBIE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the States should enact joint custody laws for fit parents, so that more children are raised with the benefits of having a father and a mother in their lives.

Whereas, in the Fatherhood Program provided for in section 117 of H.R. 240, as introduced in the House of Representatives on January 4, 2005, it states that—

(1) in approximately 84 percent of the cases where a parent is absent, that parent is the father;

(2) if current trends continue, half of all children born today will live apart from one of their parents, usually their father, at some point before they turn 18 years old;

(3) where families (whether intact or with a parent absent) are living in poverty, a significant factor is the father's lack of job skills;

(4) committed and responsible fathering during infancy and early childhood contributes to the development of emotional security, curiosity, and math and verbal skills;

(5) an estimated 19,400,000 children (27 percent) live apart from their biological fathers; and

(6) 40 percent of the children under age 18 not living with their biological fathers had not seen their fathers even once in the past 12 months, according to national survey data;

Whereas single parents are to be commended for the tremendous job that they do with their children;

Whereas America needs to encourage responsible parenting by both fathers and mothers, whenever possible;

Whereas America needs to encourage both parents (and extended families) to be actively involved in children's lives;

Whereas a way to do that is to encourage joint custody (shared parenting);

Whereas the American Bar Association found in 1997 that 19 States plus the District of Columbia had some form of presumption for joint custody, either legal, physical, or both, and since then, 13 additional States have added some form of presumption, bringing the current total to 32 States plus the District of Columbia;

Whereas Census Bureau data shows a correlation between joint custody (shared parenting) and a higher payment of financial child support;

Whereas social science literature shows that children are well adjusted in an intact family with two parents in the home, and research also shows that for children of divorced, separated, and never married parents, joint custody is strongly associated with positive outcomes for children on important measures of adjustment and well being; and

Whereas research by the Department of Health and Human Services shows that the States with the highest amount of joint custody subsequently had the lowest divorce rate: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that the
 3 States should pass joint custody laws for fit parents, so
 4 that more children are raised with the benefits of having
 5 a father and a mother in their lives.

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