

H. Res. 537

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

March 10, 2008.

Whereas 9–1–1 is nationally recognized as the number to call in an emergency to receive immediate help from police, fire, emergency medical services, or other appropriate emergency response entities;

Whereas in 1967, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a “single number should be established” nationwide for reporting emergency situations, and other Federal Government agencies and various governmental officials also supported and encouraged the recommendation;

Whereas in 1968, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) announced that it would establish the digits 9–1–1 as the emergency code throughout the United States;

Whereas 9–1–1 was designated by Congress as the national emergency call number under the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (Public Law 106–81);

Whereas the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–494) established enhanced 9–1–1 as “a high national priority” as part of our Nation’s homeland security and public safety;

Whereas it is important that policy makers at all levels of government understand the importance of 9–1–1, how the system works today, and the steps that are needed to modernize the 9–1–1 system;

Whereas the 9–1–1 system is the connection between the eyes and ears of the public and emergency responders, and is a significant homeland security asset;

Whereas there are over 6,000 9–1–1 public safety answering points (SAPS) serving more than 3,000 counties and parishes throughout the United States;

Whereas SAPS answer more than 200,000,000 9–1–1 calls each year in the United States, and a growing number of 9–1–1 calls are made using wireless and Internet Protocol-based communications services;

Whereas a growing segment of the population, including the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind, and individuals with speech disabilities, are increasingly communicating with nontraditional text, video, and instant messaging communications services, and anticipate that these services will be able to connect directly to 9–1–1;

Whereas the growth and variety of means of communication, including mobile and Internet Protocol-based systems, impose challenges for accessing 9–1–1 and implementing enhanced 9–1–1, and require increased education and awareness about their capabilities and limitations;

Whereas numerous other N–1–1 and 800 number services exist for non-emergency situations, including 2–1–1, 3–1–1, 5–1–1, 7–1–1, 8–1–1, poison control centers, and mental health hotlines, and the public needs to be educated on when to use these services in addition to or instead of 9–1–1;

Whereas international visitors and individuals immigrating to the United States make up an increasing part of the Nation's population in any given year, and such visitors and individuals may have limited knowledge of our emergency calling system;

Whereas people of all ages use 9-1-1, and it is critical to educate members of the public of all ages on the proper use of 9-1-1;

Whereas thousands of 9-1-1 calls are made every year by children properly trained in the use of 9-1-1, resulting in lives saved, and which, in turn, underscores the critical importance of training children early in life about 9-1-1;

Whereas there is a need to reduce the widespread misuse of the 9-1-1 system, including prank and non-emergency calls, which can result in costly and inefficient use of 9-1-1 and emergency response resources;

Whereas we as a Nation should strive to host at least 1 educational event in every school in the country each year regarding the proper use of 9-1-1;

Whereas an established National 9-1-1 Education Month could include public awareness events, including conferences and media outreach, training activities for parents, teachers, school administrators, care givers, children, the elderly, and businesses; educational events in schools and other appropriate venues; and production and distribution of educational content on 9-1-1 designed to educate people of all ages on the importance and proper use of 9-1-1; and

Whereas Americans deserve the finest the Nation can offer in 9-1-1 education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the designation of an appropriate month as “National 9–1–1 Education Month” and the goals of such designation; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation—

(A) designating a month as “National 9–1–1 Education Month”; and

(B) calling upon Government officials, parents, teachers, school administrators, care givers, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies, training events, and activities.

Attest:

Clerk.