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119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 655

Expressing support for the annual designation of the first Saturday after the Spring Equinox as ''National Day of Play''.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 22, 2026

Mr. RICKETTS (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. RISCH, and Mrs. BRITT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the annual designation of the first Saturday after the Spring Equinox as ''National Day of Play''.

Whereas the Surgeon General has formally declared an epidemic of loneliness and social isolation, highlighting health impacts such as higher risk for anxiety, depression, heart disease, dementia, and a shorter life span;

Whereas people are spending less time with family and friends and are less involved in their communities;

Whereas a 2022 study found that families spend a significant portion of shared physical spaces in alone-together time, meaning individuals are present but engaged in their own activities such as using devices;

Whereas studies suggest that 21 percent of adults in the United States feel lonely;

Whereas only about 1 in 3 adults receives the recommended amount of physical activity each week, with less than 5 percent participating in 30 minutes of activity each day;

Whereas community-focused events, shared activities that require collaboration, and acts of service for the common good can bring a community together and promote social connection;

Whereas social connectedness reflects the continuum of meeting social connection needs;

Whereas social connection can help reduce the risk of chronic disease and serious illness;

Whereas social connection can improve the ability to manage stress, anxiety, and depression;

Whereas social connection encourages healthy eating habits and physical activity;

Whereas important communities such as neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, workplaces, and parks and recreation centers offer social connections;

Whereas play can be defined as an activity that is self-chosen, intrinsically motivated, and conducted in an active, but relatively non-stressed, frame of mind;

Whereas play is fundamentally connected to social connection as it provides space to develop and practice essential social skills such as communication, cooperation, empathy, and negotiation;

Whereas play promotes brain development, executive function skills, stress reduction, creativity, and problem-solving

skills while also strengthening relationships and fostering healthy social-emotional growth;

Whereas play is a proven stress reliever for both children and adults, promoting overall well-being;

Whereas play reduces obesity and associated diseases;

Whereas children today spend up to 35 percent less time playing freely outdoors due to a combination of factors, including increased screen time;

Whereas excessive device use has detrimental physical and mental health impacts;

Whereas long-term consequences of excessive device use include impaired social development and cognitive function, particularly in children;

Whereas excessive device use can foster an absent presence, where individuals are physically together but mentally disengaged, leading to reduced quality in face-to-face interactions and increased feelings of social isolation;

Whereas taking a break from electronics and screen time can provide significant physical, mental, and social benefits;

Whereas a National Day of Play advocates for and celebrates the essential role of play and social connections;

Whereas a National Day of Play encourages individuals to put down their devices and participate in community organized events;

Whereas a National Day of Play strengthens community bonds and encourages a national focus on creating safe and healthy environments for all;

Whereas the Spring Equinox represents the official start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, signifying rebirth, renewal, and balance;

Whereas the Spring Equinox marks the time when days begin to get longer; and

Whereas March 21, 2026, is the first Saturday after the Spring Equinox: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 21, 2026, as ''National Day of Play'';

(2) expresses support for the annual designation of the first Saturday after the Spring Equinox as ''National Day of Play'';

(3) recognizes the importance of social connection for mental, physical, and social development; and

(4) encourages people to put their electronics down and play.

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