

H. Res. 522

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

June 19, 2000.

Whereas studies reveal that even in high-crime, inner-city neighborhoods, well over 90 percent of children from safe, stable, two-parent homes do not become delinquents;

Whereas in 1998, 1.2 million babies, or 33 percent of all newborns, were born out of wedlock;

Whereas children with fathers at home tend to do better in school, are less prone to depression, and have more successful relationships;

Whereas premature infants whose fathers spend ample time playing with them have better cognitive outcomes and children who have higher-than-average self-esteem and lower-than-average depression report having a close relationship with their father;

Whereas both boys and girls demonstrate a greater ability to take initiative and evidence self-control when they are reared with fathers who are actively involved in their upbringing;

Whereas although mothers often work tremendously hard to rear their children in a nurturing environment, a mother can benefit from the positive support of a father for her children;

Whereas it is recognized that to promote responsible fatherhood is in no way meant to denigrate the standing or parenting of single mothers, but rather to increase the chances that children will have two caring parents to help them grow up healthy and secure;

Whereas a broad array of America's leading family and child development experts agree that it is in the best interests of children and the nation as a whole to encourage more two-parent, father involved families;

Whereas, according to a 1996 Gallup Poll, 79.1 percent of Americans believe the most significant family or social problem facing America is the physical absence of the father from the home and the resulting lack of involvement of fathers in the rearing and development of their children;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of the Census, in 1996, 16,993,000 children in the United States (one-fourth of all children in the United States) lived in families in which a father was absent;

Whereas, according to a 1996 Gallup Poll, 90.9 percent of Americans believe "it is important for children to live in a home with both their mother and their father";

Whereas it is estimated that half of all United States children born today will spend at least half their childhood in a family in which a father figure is absent;

Whereas the United States is now the world's leader in fatherless families, according to the United States Bureau of the Census;

Whereas estimates of the likelihood that marriages will end in divorce range from 40 percent to 50 percent, and ap-

proximately 3 out of every 5 divorcing couples have at least one child;

Whereas almost half of all 11- through 16-year-old children who live in mother-headed homes have not seen their father in the last 12 months;

Whereas the likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is reared without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families;

Whereas a study of juveniles in state reform institutions found that 70 percent grew up in single or no parent situations;

Whereas children of single-parents are less likely to complete high school and more likely to have low earnings and low employment stability as adults than children reared in two-parent families;

Whereas a 1990 Los Angeles Times poll found that 57 percent of all fathers and 55 percent of all mothers feel guilty about not spending enough time with their children;

Whereas almost 20 percent of 6th through 12th graders report that they have not had a good conversation lasting for at least 10 minutes with at least one of their parents in more than a month;

Whereas, according to a Gallup poll, over 50 percent of all adults agreed that fathers today spend less time with their children than their fathers spent with them;

Whereas President Clinton has stated that “the single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of fathers from their children’s homes because it contributes to so many other social problems” and that “the real

source of the [welfare] problem is the inordinate number of out of wedlock births in this country”;

Whereas the Congressional Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion and the Senate Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion were both formed in 1997, and the Governors Fatherhood Task Force was formed in February 1998, and the Mayors Task Force was formed in June 1999;

Whereas a growing number of community-based organizations are implementing outreach support and skills building programs for fathers;

Whereas a disproportionate amount of Federal dollars are spent on crime, a social symptom, as compared to addressing the principal underlying cause of crime: an increasing absence of fathers from the home;

Whereas the Congressional Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion is exploring the social changes that are required to ensure that every child is reared with a father who is committed to being actively involved in the rearing and development of his children;

Whereas the National Fatherhood Initiative holds an annual National Summit on Fatherhood in Washington, D.C., with the purpose of mobilizing a response to father absence in several of the most powerful sectors of society, including public policy, public and private social services, education, religion, entertainment, the media, and the civic community; and

Whereas the promotion of fatherhood is a bipartisan issue:
Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that the creation of a better America depends in large part on the active involvement of fathers in the rearing and development of their children;

(2) urges each father in America to accept his full share of responsibility for the lives of his children, to be actively involved in rearing his children, and to encourage the academic, moral, and spiritual development of his children;

(3) urges governments and institutions at every level to remove barriers to father involvement and enact public policies that encourage and support the efforts of fathers who want to become more engaged in the lives of their children;

(4) encourages each father to devote time, energy, and resources to his children, recognizing that children need not only material support, but more importantly a secure, nurturing, family environment; and

(5) expresses its support for the National Fatherhood Initiative, and its work to inspire and equip fathers to be positively involved in the raising and development of their children.

Attest:

Clerk.