

One Hundred Sixth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday,
the twenty-fourth day of January, two thousand*

Concurrent Resolution

- Whereas basic knowledge of United States history is essential to full and informed participation in civic life and to the larger vibrancy of the American experiment in self-government;
- Whereas basic knowledge of the past serves as a civic glue, binding together a diverse people into a single Nation with a common purpose;
- Whereas citizens who lack knowledge of United States history will also lack an understanding and appreciation of the democratic principles that define and sustain the Nation as a free people, such as liberty, justice, tolerance, government by the consent of the governed, and equality under the law;
- Whereas a recent Roper survey done for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni reveals that the next generation of American leaders and citizens is in danger of losing America's civic memory;
- Whereas the Roper survey found that 81 percent of seniors at elite colleges and universities could not answer basic high school level questions concerning United States history, that scarcely more than half knew general information about American democracy and the Constitution, and that only 22 percent could identify the source of the most famous line of the Gettysburg Address;
- Whereas many of the Nation's colleges and universities no longer require United States history as a prerequisite to graduation, including 100 percent of the top institutions of higher education;
- Whereas 78 percent of the Nation's top colleges and universities no longer require the study of any form of history;
- Whereas America's colleges and universities are leading bellwethers of national priorities and values, setting standards for the whole of the United States education system and sending signals to students, teachers, parents, and public schools about what every educated citizen in a democracy must know;
- Whereas many of America's most distinguished historians and intellectuals have expressed alarm about the growing historical illiteracy of college and university graduates and the consequences for the Nation; and
- Whereas the distinguished historians and intellectuals fear that without a common civic memory and a common understanding of the remarkable individuals, events, and ideals that have shaped the Nation, people in the United States risk losing much of what it means to be an American, as well as the ability to fulfill the fundamental responsibilities of citizens in a democracy: Now, therefore, be it

S. Con. Res. 129—2

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the historical illiteracy of America's college and university graduates is a serious problem that should be addressed by the Nation's higher education community;

(2) boards of trustees and administrators at institutions of higher education in the United States should review their curricula and add requirements in United States history;

(3) State officials responsible for higher education should review public college and university curricula in their States and promote requirements in United States history;

(4) parents should encourage their children to select institutions of higher education with substantial history requirements and students should take courses in United States history whether required or not; and

(5) history teachers and educators at all levels should redouble their efforts to bolster the knowledge of United States history among students of all ages and to restore the vitality of America's civic memory.

Attest:

Secretary of the Senate.

Attest:

Clerk of the House of Representatives.