

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 574

Designating May 2, 2022, as “Dr. John E. Fryer Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 31, 2022

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating May 2, 2022, as “Dr. John E. Fryer Day”.

Whereas Dr. John E. Fryer practiced psychiatry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from 1967 to 2003, and was a professor of psychiatry and family and community medicine at Temple University School of Medicine;

Whereas, beginning in 1952, the American Psychiatric Association (referred to in this preamble as the “APA”) classified homosexuality as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (referred to in this preamble as the “DSM”) and in the revised DSM–II;

Whereas, as a result of the classification and resulting therapeutic protocol, homosexuals in the United States were subject to chemical castration, electric shock therapy, mental institutionalization, and lobotomies;

Whereas the classification was used to demonize homosexuals and other non-heterosexuals as perverts to be feared and loathed and to buttress homophobic statutes and regulations;

Whereas many States would not grant professional licenses to known homosexuals and would revoke licenses from individuals who were later found to be homosexual;

Whereas, in 1971, gay rights pioneers Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings successfully petitioned the APA for a panel on homosexuality at the APA annual meeting;

Whereas Kameny and Gittings sought to have a gay psychiatrist on the panel, but no one would risk losing their license and professional standing by admitting publicly to being homosexual;

Whereas Dr. Fryer agreed to appear on the panel under the pseudonym of Dr. Henry Anonymous, while in a mask and using a voice modulator;

Whereas Dr. Fryer's testimony on May 2, 1972, at the APA annual meeting was so powerful that the APA undertook studies to determine whether the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness was based on science or prejudice;

Whereas, in 1973, after study and review, the members of the APA voted to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness;

Whereas, as a result of Dr. John E. Fryer's courage and articulate presentation as the first psychiatrist in the United States to speak publicly about his homosexuality, the course of civil rights for individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (referred to in this preamble as "LGBTQ") was seminally advanced;

Whereas, during the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (referred to in this preamble “HIV/AIDS”) crisis, Dr. John Fryer was among the first, if not the first, psychiatrists to provide professional services to individuals with HIV/AIDS and individuals who had lost loved ones to HIV/AIDS;

Whereas Dr. John Fryer’s contributions to the LGBTQ community have been adapted into the celebrated theater production entitled “217 Boxes of Dr. Henry Anonymous” and the movie “CURED”;

Whereas the Philadelphia Historical Commission has designated the John. E. Fryer House at 138 West Walnut Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as historic in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places;

Whereas the Philadelphia City Council proclaimed May 2, 2022, as John Fryer Day in the city of Philadelphia to mark the 50th anniversary of his testimony on homosexuality at the 1972 APA annual meeting and to commemorate his momentous and seminal LGBTQ civil rights activism; and

Whereas Dr. John Fryer is a civil rights hero and was designated by the Equality Forum as an LGBT History Month Icon in 2016: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates May 2, 2022, as “Dr. John E.
3 Fryer Day”; and

4 (2) encourages the Federal Government, States,
5 and localities to continue supporting the teaching of
6 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (re-
7 ferred to in this resolution as “LGBTQ”) history,

- 1 including the contributions of Dr. John E. Fryer
- 2 and other LGBTQ civil rights heroes.

