III

104TH CONGRESS

2D SESSION S. RES. 263 Relating to church burning.
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 1996 Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN (for herself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. KEMPTHORNE, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PELL, Mr. LAUTEN- BERG, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. SIMON, and Mr. HARKIN) submitted the following resolution; which was held at the desk

JUNE 18, 1996 Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Relating to church burning. Whereas there have been at least 32 fires of suspicious origin

at churches serving African-American communities in the

last 18 months; Whereas these churches are a vital part of the life of these communities; Whereas intentionally burning churches is a very heinous

crime in these communities, and all across America, be-
cause church burning was used during the civil rights
struggle in an attempt to intimidate African-Americans
from exercising their Constitutional rights;

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•SRES 263 IS

Whereas there have been at least 60 fires and incidents of
desecration in houses of worship in 15 different States

since 1990; Whereas intentionally burning churches, when done to intimi-
date any American from the free exercise of his or her

rights as an American, is inconsistent with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which
guarantees every American the right to the free exercise

of his or her religion; Whereas intentionally burning churches, when done to intimi-

date any American from the free exercise of his or her

rights as an American is also inconsistent with the First Amendment guarantee that ensures that Americans can

freely and peaceably assemble together; and Whereas intentionally burning churches, when done to intimi-

date any American from the free exercise of his or her
rights is a serious national problem that must be expedi-
tiously and vigorously addressed: Now, therefore, be it

1 Resolved, That—
2 (1) the Senate condemns arson against church-
3 es as being totally inconsistent with American val-

4 ues;
5 (2) the Senate believes that the investigation

6 and prosecution of those who are responsible for
7 fires at churches, and especially any incidents of
8 arson whose purpose is to divide communities or to

9 intimidate any Americans, should be a high national
10 priority; and

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1 (3) the Senate commends the President for
2 pledging to devote all Federal resources necessary to

3 bring those responsible for committing any act of
4 arson against churches to justice, and urges that all

5 investigations of fires at churches which are of sus-
6 picious origin are conducted in a sensitive manner
7 that reflects the special character of churches and

8 the role they play in American communities.

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