

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 12

Expressing the sense of the Congress that a model curriculum designed to educate elementary and secondary school-aged children about the Irish famine should be developed.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 4, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. MANTON, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. FOGLETTA, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. HINCHEY, and Mr. DOYLE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that a model curriculum designed to educate elementary and secondary school-aged children about the Irish famine should be developed.

Whereas the Act of Union of 1800 made Ireland a part of the United Kingdom;

Whereas, in 1845, the potato was the staple crop and basic nourishment and sustenance of the people of Ireland;

Whereas a potato blight destroyed most of the potato crop in Ireland between 1845 and 1850;

Whereas the famine brought about by the potato blight led to mass starvation over the whole of Ireland and caused the death of more than 1,000,000 of the men, women, and children of Ireland;

Whereas the British government established a massive public works system in a purported attempt to aid the people of Ireland and then sabotaged that system by imposing wages far below the escalating price of food and setting conditions for task work that tens of thousands of people could never meet, thus causing the acknowledged failure of the very relief system it had created;

Whereas, beginning in mid-1847, the British government of the time divested itself of financial responsibility for relieving the famine-stricken population, instead throwing responsibility on the Irish landlords;

Whereas many landlords, themselves financially hard-pressed by the impact of the famine, dispossessed insolvent tenants en masse, leading to the eviction of half a million Irish people between 1846 and 1854 causing countless deaths from exposure, disease, and starvation;

Whereas the elongation of the potato blight and the lack of aid led to the mass emigration of more than 1,000,000 of the Irish people to the United States during the years of the famine;

Whereas, after visiting Ireland in 1845, the African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass wrote that the people of Ireland “are in the same degradation as the American slaves”;

Whereas many people in Britain, most notably Quakers, were sympathetic and generous toward the people of Ireland

during the famine and organized extensive relief efforts for the starving masses;

Whereas these immigrants and their descendants have made and continue to make profound and lasting contributions to the culture and history of the United States; and

Whereas children in the United States should be educated about the famine in Ireland and its effects: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that the
3 Department of Education should develop a model curricu-
4 lum designed to educate elementary and secondary school-
5 aged children about the Irish famine and its effects, and
6 that this model curriculum should be readily available to
7 educational institutions and the public.

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