

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 92

Designating July 2, 1997, and July 2, 1998, as “National Literacy Day”.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 23, 1997

Mr. LAUTENBERG submitted the following resolution; which was referred to  
the Committee on the Judiciary

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## RESOLUTION

Designating July 2, 1997, and July 2, 1998, as “National  
Literacy Day”.

Whereas 44,000,000 United States citizens today read at a  
level that is less than the level necessary for full survival  
needs;

Whereas there are 40,000,000 adults in the United States  
who cannot read, whose resources are left untapped, and  
who are unable to make a full contribution to society;

Whereas illiteracy is growing rapidly, as 2,500,000 persons,  
including as many as 1,300,000 immigrants, 1,500,000  
high school dropouts, and 100,000 refugees, are added to  
the pool of illiterate persons annually;

Whereas the annual cost of illiteracy to the United States in  
terms of welfare expenditures, crime, prison expenses,

lost revenues, and industrial and military accidents has been estimated at \$230,000,000,000;

Whereas the competitiveness of the United States is eroded by the presence in the workplace of millions of Americans who are functionally or technologically illiterate;

Whereas there is a direct correlation between the number of illiterate adults who are unable to perform at the standard necessary for available employment and the money allocated to child welfare and unemployment compensation;

Whereas the percentage of illiterate persons in proportion to population percentage is higher for African Americans and Hispanics, resulting in increased economic and social discrimination against these minorities;

Whereas the prison population represents the highest concentration of adult illiteracy;

Whereas 1,000,000 children in the United States between the ages of 12 and 17 years old cannot read above a third grade level, 13 percent of all 17-year-olds are functionally illiterate, and 15 percent of graduates of urban high schools read at less than a sixth grade level;

Whereas 85 percent of the juveniles who appear in criminal court are functionally illiterate;

Whereas the 47 percent illiteracy rate among African American youths is expected to increase;

Whereas  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all heads of households cannot read above an eighth grade level and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of all mothers on welfare are functionally illiterate;

Whereas the cycle of illiteracy continues because the children of illiterate parents are often illiterate themselves due to

the lack of support the children receive from their home environment;

Whereas Federal, State, municipal, and private literacy programs have been able to reach only 5 percent of the total illiterate population;

Whereas it is vital to call attention to the problem of illiteracy, to understand the severity of the illiteracy problem and the detrimental effects of illiteracy on our society, and to reach those who are illiterate and unaware of the free services and help available to them; and

Whereas it is necessary to recognize and thank the thousands of volunteers who are working to promote literacy and provide support to the millions of illiterate persons in need of assistance: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) designates July 2, 1997, and July 2, 1998,  
3       as “National Literacy Day”; and

4               (2) requests that the President issue a procla-  
5       mation calling on the people of the United States to  
6       observe “National Literacy Day” with appropriate  
7       ceremonies and activities.

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