

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 125

Encouraging and promoting greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives and designating June 20, 1999, as "National Father's Return Day".

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 18, 1999

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. MACK, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. ROBB, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. GORTON, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. CAMPBELL, and Mr. THURMOND submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Encouraging and promoting greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives and designating June 20, 1999, as "National Father's Return Day".

Whereas more than 1 out of every 3 children currently live in a household where the child's father does not reside;

Whereas approximately half of all the children born in the United States will spend at least half of their childhood in a family without a father figure;

Whereas approximately 40 to 50 percent of all marriages are predicted to end in divorce;

Whereas approximately 3 out of every 5 divorcing couples have at least 1 child;

Whereas almost half of all children aged 11 through 16 that live in mother-headed homes have not seen their father in the last 12 months;

Whereas 79 percent of people in the United States believe that the most significant family or social problem facing the country is the physical absence of fathers from the home, resulting in a lack of involvement of fathers in the rearing and development of children;

Whereas the likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is reared without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood comprised largely of single-parent families;

Whereas studies reveal that even in high-crime, inner city neighborhoods, over 90 percent of children from safe, stable, 2-parent homes do not become delinquents;

Whereas compared to children reared in 2-parent families, children reared in single-parent families are less likely to complete high school and thus, more likely as adults to obtain low paying, unstable jobs;

Whereas researchers have linked the presence of fathers with improved fetal and infant development, and father-child interaction has been shown to promote a child's physical well-being, perceptual abilities, and competency for interpersonal relations;

Whereas researchers have also found that both boys and girls demonstrate a greater ability to take initiative and exercise self-control when they are reared by fathers who are actively involved in their upbringing;

Whereas the general involvement of parents in the lives of their children has decreased significantly over the last generation;

Whereas a Gallup Poll indicated that over 50 percent of all adults agree that fathers today spend less time with their children than their fathers spent with them;

Whereas nearly 20 percent of children in grades 6 through 12 report that they have not had a meaningful conversation with even 1 parent in over a month;

Whereas in a broad survey of 100,000 children in grades 6 through 12, less than half of the children “feel they have family boundaries or high expectations from parents or teachers”;

Whereas 3 out of 4 adolescents report that “they do not have adults in their lives that model positive behaviors”;

Whereas in a widely cited study of the health risks to the young people in the United States, University of Minnesota researchers found that “independent of race, ethnicity, family structure and poverty status, adolescents who are connected to their parents, their schools, and to their school community are healthier than those who are not”, and that “when teens feel connected to their families, and when parents are involved in their children’s lives, teens are protected”;

Whereas millions of single mothers in the United States are heroically struggling to raise their children in safe and loving environments;

Whereas promoting responsible fatherhood is not meant to diminish the parenting efforts of single mothers, but rather to increase the chances that children will have 2 caring parents to help them grow up healthy and secure;

Whereas many of this country’s leading experts on family and child development agree that it is in the best interest of both children and the United States to encourage more 2-parent, father-involved families to form and endure;

Whereas in 1994, the National Fatherhood Initiative was formed to further the goal of raising societal awareness about the ramifications of father absence and father disengagement by mobilizing a national response to father absence;

Whereas the Congressional Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion and the Senate Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion that were formed in 1997, the Governors’ Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion of 1998, and the Mayor’s Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion of 1999 were created to work in partnership with the National Fatherhood Initiative;

Whereas on June 14, 1999, the National Fatherhood Initiative is holding a national summit on supporting urban fathers in Washington, D.C., to mobilize a response to father absence by many powerful sectors of society, including public policy, social services, educational, religious, entertainment, media, and civic groups; and

Whereas those groups are working across party, ideological, racial, and gender lines in order to reverse the trend of father absence and disengagement by encouraging and supporting responsible fatherhood and greater father involvement in children’s lives: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes that the creation of a better

3 United States requires the active involvement of fa-

1 thers in the rearing and development of their chil-
2 dren;

3 (2) urges each father in the United States to
4 accept his full share of responsibility for the lives of
5 his children, to be actively involved in rearing his
6 children, and to encourage the emotional, academic,
7 moral, and spiritual development of his children;

8 (3) urges the States to hold fathers who ignore
9 their legal responsibilities accountable for their ac-
10 tions and to pursue more aggressive enforcement of
11 child support obligations;

12 (4) encourages each father to devote time, en-
13 ergy, and resources to his children, recognizing that
14 children need not only material support, but also,
15 more importantly, a secure, affectionate, family envi-
16 ronment;

17 (5) urges governments and institutions at every
18 level to remove barriers to father involvement and
19 enact public policies that encourage and support the
20 efforts of fathers who do want to become more en-
21 gaged in the lives of their children;

22 (6) to demonstrate the commitment of the Sen-
23 ate to those critically important goals, designates
24 June 20, 1999, as “National Father’s Return Day”;

1 (7) calls on fathers around the country to use
2 the day to reconnect and rededicate themselves to
3 their children’s lives, to spend National Father’s Re-
4 turn Day with their children, and to express their
5 love and support for them; and

6 (8) requests that the President issue a procla-
7 mation calling on the people of the United States to
8 observe “National Father’s Return Day” with ap-
9 propriate ceremonies and activities.

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