

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 366

BY WARNSTADT and RICHARDSON

A Concurrent Resolution urging Iowa's congressional delegation to support a federal appropriation to implement the Teaching America's History program.

WHEREAS, in July 2000, the United States House of Representatives and Senate unanimously passed Concurrent Resolution 366, which states that a basic knowledge of history is "essential to a full and informed participation in civic life and to the larger vibrancy of our experiment in self-government," and calls for a national response to the nation's growing ignorance of American history; and

WHEREAS, the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that only 17 percent of fourth graders, 14 percent of eighth graders, and 11 percent of twelfth graders were judged to be proficient in their knowledge of history; over one-third of fourth and eighth graders failed to reach the basic level of proficiency and more than half of the twelfth graders surveyed could not even achieve a basic understanding of the history of their own nation; and

WHEREAS, teachers too often do not have sufficient expertise in historical understanding, and according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 81 percent of United States social studies teachers did not major or minor in history; and

WHEREAS, since 1974, a nonprofit organization called National History Day has sponsored an

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1 innovative program to reform the teaching and learning
2 of history in America; and

3 WHEREAS, the program, Teaching America's History,
4 developed by National History Day in cooperation with
5 the National Council for History Education, assists
6 teachers in modifying their approach to teaching
7 history by enhancing teaching methods to include
8 primary documents and community resources, and trains
9 participants to educate other teachers in these
10 methods; and

11 WHEREAS, the National Council for History Education
12 has worked in over 30 states to improve the quality of
13 history standards in state documents and in
14 instruction to implement the standards; and

15 WHEREAS, the National Council for History Education
16 programs and conferences have engaged more than 8,000
17 teachers, who have in turn taught an average of 125
18 students per day, resulting in the improvement of
19 learning of history for 1,000,000 students per day;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the National History Day and National
22 Council for History Education programs offer
23 complementary summer and school year in-service
24 training programs to inform and instruct teachers in
25 effective teaching methods and history content; and

26 WHEREAS, funding is necessary to achieve the
27 purposes of supporting and expanding the program to
28 improve the teaching and learning of history in every
29 region of the United States; NOW THEREFORE,

30 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE

1 SENATE CONCURRING, That Iowa's congressional
2 delegation is urged to support a federal appropriation
3 for implementation of the program, Teaching America's
4 History, a joint effort of the National History Day
5 program and the National Council For History.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon adoption, the
7 Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives shall send
8 a copy of this Resolution to each member of Iowa's
9 congressional delegation: Senator Charles E.

10 Grassley, Senator Tom Harkin, Representative Jim
11 Leach, Representative Jim Nussle, Representative
12 Leonard L. Boswell, Representative Greg Ganske, and
13 Representative Tom Latham.

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