

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45

WHEREAS, our Country was founded on the precepts of freedom, liberty, diversity and the right of the people to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience; and

WHEREAS, from the very beginning of our nation to the founding of our first national government in 1774, and from the Continental Congress to the Constitutional Convention and the years after the establishment of our Constitution, voluntary prayer has been a unifying and consoling force; and

WHEREAS, statements of belief in a Supreme Power and the virtue of seeking guidance, strength and protection from that power are prevalent throughout our national history and appear in our national documents as well as in virtually every state constitution; and

WHEREAS, the framers of the Constitution, recognizing free exercise of religion as an inalienable right, secured its protection with the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, every session of Congress, and of many other legislative and public bodies across the nation, begins with the comfort and encouragement of voluntary prayer; and

WHEREAS, our government has a constitutional obligation to protect religious freedom; and

WHEREAS, one of the purposes of education is to prepare students to be good citizens; and

WHEREAS, instilling an appreciation and respect not only for the beliefs and traditions of others but also for the longstanding beliefs and traditions of the nation forms a part of good citizenship; and

WHEREAS, voluntary student prayer formed a part of American public schools from their origination in 1642 for over three hundred years afterward until the United States Supreme Court in a 1962 ruling it said was "without precedent", struck down what it described as "voluntary, nondenominational school prayer"; and

WHEREAS, in 1985 the Supreme Court even struck down voluntary, silent student prayers; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of recent religion-hostile court decisions now prohibit the overwhelming majority of Americans from participating in the very same religious expressions their parents, grandparents, and generations before them enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, an increasing and ever-widening hostility against voluntary prayer and public religious speech has produced a public atmosphere of fear, intimidation, and confusion about school

prayer and religious speech; and

WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of Americans now favor giving specific protections to these traditional religious expressions; and

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 81 has been offered in the United States House of Representatives proposing a constitutional amendment for ratification by the people:

"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience:

¶Neither the United States nor any State shall establish any official religion, but the people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage, and traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed.

¶The United States and the States shall not compose school prayers, nor require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity.":

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-first General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, urges the United States Congress to pass House Joint Resolution No. 81; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Missouri Congressional Delegation in order that they may be apprised of the sense of this matter.

Resolution

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