

as the government treats religious speech and other speech equally. The resolution has a preeminently secular purpose, which is to ensure that religious and non-religious speech are treated equally.

The First Amendment is to secure religious liberty. Justice Stevens has written that, "nothing in the Constitution as interpreted by this Court prohibits any public school student from voluntarily praying at any time before, during or after the school day."

Similarly, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has written that the Religion Clauses of our Constitution have "kept religion a matter for the individual conscience, not for the prosecutor or bureaucrat."

And we should make certain that religion is a matter for the individual conscience. But keeping religion a matter for the individual conscience should not mean that a schoolchild must stand silent, unable to turn to God for comfort or guidance in times of need. Not every reference to God represents the impermissible establishment of religion. Instead, let us make certain that every individual, including every schoolchild, can be assured of his/her right to pray voluntarily to God, as he/she pleases, consistent with the intent of the Framers, who wrote the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 134—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2007 AS "ADOPT A SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH"

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 134

Whereas extensive research has demonstrated a link between high-quality school libraries and student achievement in the classroom and on standardized tests, regardless of the level of poverty or family instability experienced by the student;

Whereas 37 percent of all fourth grade children in the United States are reading at below-basic reading levels;

Whereas the school libraries of the United States are valuable tools that could be used to inspire and enhance literacy for all children;

Whereas, to become a lifelong reader, a student must be exposed to adults who read regularly and serve as positive reading role models;

Whereas school librarians are—

- (1) instrumental in helping teachers educate the students of the United States; and
- (2) through the use of books, computer resources, and other resources, a necessary component for expanding the curriculum of the public schools of the United States;

Whereas the school libraries of the United States are used as media centers to provide students with opportunities to interact with computers and other electronic information resources;

Whereas the use of school library computers helps students develop media and technological skills, including—

- (1) critical thinking;
- (2) communication competency; and

(3) the ethical and appropriate use of technology information access, retrieval, and production;

Whereas the school libraries of the United States serve as a gathering place for students of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to come together to debate ideas;

Whereas only approximately \$1,000,000,000 is allocated to school libraries each year, which translates to \$0.54 per student; and

Whereas numerous programs, including the READesign program of the Heart of America Foundation, are working to reestablish school libraries as the hearts of the public schools of the United States by—

(1) offering intensive care for school libraries though efforts designed—

- (A) to redecorate school libraries;
  - (B) to revitalize technology available to school libraries; and
  - (C) to replenish the book shelves of school libraries; and
- (2) renewing community support and interest for—

- (A) enriching the lives of children; and
- (B) helping students regain lost opportunities for learning: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2007 as "Adopt a School Library Month" to raise public awareness about the important role school libraries play in the academic achievement of children; and

(2) calls on the Federal Government, States, local governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and other activities.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, When I was growing up in East St. Louis, I spent hours reading about faraway places, exciting adventures, and historic figures and events. I spent countless hours in the library discovering wonderful stories and developed a lifelong love of reading.

Now imagine going to school where the library is dark and uninviting, and where there is no librarian in sight. These conditions are real. I have visited schools in my home State of Illinois and seen libraries that show their years of neglect.

The dire circumstances that face some of these school libraries are not due to lack of concern by school officials. School leaders are working with limited budgets and unforgiving performance standards. School libraries were once one of the central features of our school, but are now one of the first programs to be cut.

In Cairo, IL, there is no money available for new books. The superintendent told me that his school libraries would have no books at all if it were not for the donations from the local community. In Collinsville, school libraries had science books so outdated they were published before man landed on the moon. We cannot expect our students to compete in today's global economy unless we provide them with the tools that they need to succeed.

Many studies have demonstrated the strong link between high-quality school libraries and student achievement, both in the classroom and on standardized tests. School libraries benefit all students, regardless of race, class, or family situation. According to a study by the Illinois School Library Media Association, students average 5 percent to 13 percent higher on their

reading and writing test scores when their libraries are well-funded. Students in schools with more current collections in their libraries scored 7 percent to 13 percent higher in reading and writing in lower grades and 3 percent higher on college entrance exams. In Illinois, additional computers in school libraries led to an 8-percent increase in the reading performance of fifth to eighth graders, and to an 11-percent increase in the writing scores for eighth graders. The data is consistent and clear: All of our children are more likely to succeed when their school possesses a high-quality school library.

Many groups recognize the importance of school libraries and are doing something about it. In particular, I commend the Heart of America Foundation, which is focused on improving some of the Nation's most needy school libraries. In impoverished communities where many libraries have one book or less per student, Heart of America tries to bring the collections of these libraries up to at least the national average of 22 books per student. Its READesign program offers intensive care for school libraries through renovation, revitalizing technology, and replenishing book shelves. Heart of America makes READesigns a community effort by bringing together individuals, corporate sponsors, and community groups to provide schools with "library makeovers." The transformation of these school libraries is truly extraordinary. It goes beyond simply painting and restocking the bookshelves. After a READesign, a school library once again becomes a welcoming and vibrant center of learning, books, and technology.

I am confident that others will be as inspired by the READesign program and the potential of our school libraries as I am. In designating September 2007 as "Adopt a School Library Month," it is my hope that individuals will remember the importance of school libraries in facilitating the academic achievement of our children and support needy school libraries in their respective communities.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 135—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 135

Whereas the United States has enduring national interests in the peace and security of southeastern Europe, and in the greater integration of the region into the Euro-Atlantic community of democratic, well-governed states;