

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 13

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2003 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Dwyer, Elliott, and O'Donnell**
Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2003
Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Celebrate Freedom Week in Public Schools**

3 FOR the purpose of urging local boards of education in the State to establish
4 Celebrate Freedom Week during the month of September by instituting a
5 curriculum in the public schools designed to instill a sense of the sacrifices made
6 during the founding of this country and the values upon which this country was
7 founded.

8 WHEREAS, The sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and
9 the values on which this country was founded are deserving of special recognition by
10 public school students; and

11 WHEREAS, Social studies classes could be supplemented with at least 3 hours
12 of instruction, as determined by each local board of education, to educate public school
13 students regarding the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of
14 Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in
15 their historical contexts; and

16 WHEREAS, The study of the Declaration of Independence should include the
17 relationship of the ideas expressed in that document to subsequent American history,
18 including the relationship of its ideas to the rich diversity of our people in this nation
19 of immigrants, the American Revolution, the formulation of the United States
20 Constitution, and the abolitionist movement, which led to the Emancipation
21 Proclamation and the women's suffrage movement; and

22 WHEREAS, These concepts would be reinforced through the recitation by
23 students in grade levels 3 through 12, at the beginning of each school day, of an
24 excerpt of the Declaration of Independence, such as, "We hold these truths to be
25 self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator
26 with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of
27 Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,
28 deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"; now, therefore, be it

29 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the local
30 boards of education in the State are respectfully urged to develop and institute a
31 Celebrate Freedom Week curriculum during the month of September designed to

1 instill a sense of the sacrifices made during the founding of this country and the
2 values upon which this country was founded; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That in developing Celebrate Freedom Week, local boards of
4 education should provide for the exemption of students from the recitation of excerpts
5 from the Declaration of Independence:

6 (1) on written request from the student's parent or guardian;

7 (2) on the basis of a conscientious objection to the recitation; or

8 (3) by virtue of being the child of a representative of a foreign
9 government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity;
10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
12 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
13 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
14 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates.