
By: ~~Senator Britt~~ **Senators Britt, Colburn, and Greenip**

Introduced and read first time: February 14, 2005

Assigned to: Rules

Re-referred to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs, February 21, 2005

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 20, 2005

RESOLUTION NO. _____

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Civic Literacy**

3 FOR the purpose of recognizing the importance of civic literacy and civic engagement
4 in Maryland; encouraging State officials to convene a Summit on Civic Literacy;
5 providing for the makeup and purpose of the Summit; providing for a certain
6 report; and generally relating to efforts to promote civic literacy and civic
7 engagement in the State.

8 WHEREAS, Civic literacy encourages young people to be thoughtful and
9 productive members of their communities and future leaders of the State of
10 Maryland; and

11 WHEREAS, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and
12 Engagement (CIRCLE), based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy,
13 has been established to promote research on the civic and political engagement of
14 Americans between the ages of 15 and 25, supporting projects that have practical
15 implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and
16 civic life; and

17 WHEREAS, It is crucial to the future health of our representative democracy
18 that all young people be knowledgeable about democratic principles and practices,
19 engaged in their communities and in politics, and committed to the public good; and

20 WHEREAS, On the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1998, 75%
21 of students scored at "basic" or "below basic" levels; and

22 WHEREAS, According to "The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A
23 Generational Portrait", nearly one-half of 15- to 25-year-olds indicate civic
24 education increases their interest and participation in civic affairs; and

1 WHEREAS, Individuals who have a clear understanding of the rights and
2 responsibilities of citizenship in a representative democracy are more likely to
3 exercise those rights and responsibilities to be competent and responsible citizens;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, According to The Center for Information and Research on Civic
6 Learning and Engagement, only 42% of eligible 18- to 24-year-olds voted in the 2004
7 Presidential election; and

8 WHEREAS, The need for civic literacy in our State is crucial to the long-term
9 social and political health of Maryland; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
11 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates, with the
12 assistance of the State Department of Education and the Maryland Delegation to the
13 Congressional Conference on Civic Education, are urged to convene a Summit on
14 Civic Literacy with the goal of determining a strategy for enhancing the long-term
15 civic engagement and literacy within the State of Maryland and recommending a plan
16 for improving civic engagement and literacy; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the makeup of the Summit on Civic Literacy shall include a
18 diverse range of student, teacher, and administrator representatives from K-16
19 education, media, civic organizations, and elected officials, and the summit shall be
20 facilitated by CIRCLE, based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy,
21 and the Maryland Delegation to the Congressional Conference on Civic Education;
22 and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Summit on Civic Literacy shall provide a report, with its
24 findings and recommendations for future action, to the President of the Senate and
25 the Speaker of the House of Delegates on or before December 1, 2005; and be it
26 further

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