

House Resolution 874

Resolution Supporting the Designation of a National Year of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer

Submitted by Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, January 11, 2022

Whereas the people of the United States have unspoken sentiments and concerns about our Nation;

Whereas we believe our Nation is unique, distinctive, and exceptional;

Whereas American exceptionalism is too often misunderstood to mean something that it is not, and it does not mean (1) justification to dominate or condescend to other nations or indulge in flattery to ourselves that we are better; or (2) that we are a chosen people or that circumstances give us privilege to circumvent law.

Whereas our Nation is bound by the same universal moral principles that must bind and shape the behaviors of all civilized nations. In this regard we are the same as all nations. And yet we are different—very different in a very important way;

Whereas it is not wealth or military power that makes us exceptional. It is not our institutions nor the genius of our written Constitution or our Bill of Rights. Not directly. These are manifestations of something more fundamental and profound;

Whereas our exceptionalism is based on something else, a singular belief, a proposition underlying all legal and constitutional beliefs;

Whereas our assertions of human equality and unalienable rights: life, liberty, and the right to pursue happiness, the right to find meaning and purpose and value in our individual lives, derives from a single assertion—that life, given to us by Creator God, is the moral basis of the unshakable bedrock of our Republic;

Whereas that proposition—the thing that makes us distinctive—is that we believe a Creator God endowed us with rights. Not just us. Everybody. Everywhere;

Whereas it is a gigantic revolutionary belief. And it is belief. It is our faith statement. It is what speaks to the soul of our Nation;

Whereas there are many great and ancient nations that believe in freedom as we do. Most countries in the world claim the rule of law and have written constitutions. Many use the language of rights and equality and declare for human dignity. But none have a coherent basis for doing so;

Whereas we alone occupy that space. God gave us rights— made us in His image and therefore demonstrated all human beings are created equal. Even the unborn. From conception;

Whereas the poor, the infirm, the old, the weak, all colors and kinds, all races, all of us are endowed by the Creator, equally, because we are made in His image;

Whereas without this fundamental belief, rights become only social protocol, conventions, historic inheritances, creatures of state citizenship, class, identity, features of consensus, and they become malleable and fading creatures in the capricious hands of willful men;

Whereas America is different because God endowed us with rights;

Whereas that belief is either true or it is false. If it is false, then we Americans, among all mankind, are most to be pitied. The experiment must fail. It cannot and must not succeed;

Whereas if it true, then we have built our country on a foundation that cannot be shaken if we are true to it—we are anchored to the eternal bedrock of all truths. As Lincoln said, “as a nation of free men we will live forever or die by suicide”;

Whereas to those whom are given much, much is expected. And somewhere deep down inside ordinary Americans know this. It is in the air we breathe;

Whereas only we ourselves can end this great experiment, and there are no external mortal forces that can over- come the bulwarks of that eternal truth;

Whereas what we believe matters, our invisible immaterial beliefs are the strength of the national soul, and the things that we hold to and serve are the foundations of our institutions, our laws, our liberty, and the hope of the Nation;

Whereas when the Founders established this Republic 250 years ago and created the institutions that guide us, they were well aware that those institutions were insufficient in themselves to govern a free people;

Whereas the lifeblood and heartbeat of the Nation is moral character. Not the institutions. Not the institutions or even the laws in themselves. For laws and institutions are corruption without the rectitude and wisdom of a moral, decent people themselves;

Whereas without the people bracing themselves to wisdom and the holdfasts of character our institutions have no power to preserve us;

Whereas if the people ever lose their love of truth, justice, goodness, and the efflorescence of beauty that flourishes in them—there can be no hope in the parchment barriers of a Constitution or the institutions created by it. No matter how noble that hope is. In effect everything rises and falls in our Republic as consequence of the character of the people;

Whereas as a Nation we live or die by the standards of our own moral character;

Whereas the Founders knew this—but many of us know we are forgetting it;

Whereas John Adams wrote to the militia of Massachusetts, “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition and revenge would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”;

Whereas John Adams is saying that the power of the state is not secured by the power of arms, but is anchored in the honesty and decency of the people;

Whereas today this may seem a quaint notion, but the Founders who experimented in government to create a just and free society understood explicitly that freedom and justice are not the product of institutions but rather institutions that defend freedom and justice are the product of a moral people;

Whereas freedom cannot exist without morality. George Washington understood this. John Adams understood this. Abraham Lincoln understood this. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., understood this;

Whereas when we drift from the Creator we drift from the source of our own liberty;

Whereas when we forget our duties to God we forget our duties to each other;

Whereas when we become prideful and lazy and forget the Father of all rights we become the orphans of oppression, and we are lost without the guiding hand of the Almighty;

Whereas it may seem that Congress is not the place to introduce an appeal to God, but our rights and all our institutions are based upon the presumption of a just and Almighty God;

Whereas Congress itself rests upon the foundation that our Creator gave us the right to govern themselves;

Whereas Abraham Lincoln said, “It is altogether fitting and proper that we do this”;

Whereas we the people of the United States continue our search for a more perfect union;

Whereas we are a people conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all are created equal, yet like in the days of President Abraham Lincoln, when he observed that “we have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied, enriched, and strengthened us”;

Whereas “we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own”;

Whereas we confess we are a self-consumed, prideful, and unloving people, quick to point out the speck in another person’s eye while missing the log in our own;

Whereas we are trusting in our wealth and skill and leaning on our own understanding;

Whereas we have become ungrateful, lovers of pleasure, stubborn, hardhearted, divisive, and unforgiving;

Whereas we confess that instead of speaking of forgiveness, we cry out for vengeance, and we have allowed the poisonous root of bitterness to grow up to trouble us;

Whereas the global pandemic of COVID–19 has intensified fear, unknowns, chaos, and confusion;

Whereas the impact of lockdowns and isolations has been severe further exacerbating the breakdown of mental health, families, communities, and our Nation;

Whereas we are divided, perhaps like we haven’t seen since the Civil War, when President Abraham Lincoln by faith prayed saying, “May we again devote ourselves to prayer and acknowledge as a people and as a nation our dependence upon the overruling power of God. Let us confess our sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with the assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon”;

Whereas, by faith, at the 1787 Constitutional Convention when the outcome looked grim, Benjamin Franklin appealed to the delegates and urged prayer asking, “I have lived, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?”;

Whereas during World War I and at the signing of the Armistice, President Wilson proclaimed, “Complete victory . . . God has indeed been gracious, let us thank Him.”;

Whereas this year marked the 80th anniversary of the initial National Bible Week declaration made by President Franklin D. Roosevelt just weeks before the start of World War II;

Whereas George Washington Carver, born a slave during the Civil War, testified in 1921 in front of the House Ways and Means Committee expounding on a myriad of ingenious uses for the peanut transforming the economy and which had been revealed to him by faith as he regularly walked through the woods at 4 a.m.;

Whereas President John F. Kennedy said, “The guiding principle of this nation has been, is now, and ever shall be ‘In God We Trust’ ”;

Whereas Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., encouraged us to “Pray daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free”;

Whereas it is time for us to offer a resolution to humble ourselves and entreat wisdom from God—the Father of all blessings and mercy: a resolution of national contrition, prayer and fasting. A resolution in the great tradition of our free people. We have as His guidance many times before. A resolution to return to the wellspring of liberty and our rights; a resolution to depart from iniquity and entreat His guidance. A prayer that we remember Him as the Father of every good thing that we have, and everything as a Nation and people we aspire to be; and

Whereas we must ask ourselves, what might God do in the next 365 days if we commit to reading His Word daily and praying together weekly for our Nation? In our families? For this generation in misery and despair? We are expectant that He will do immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20), and that He will hear from Heaven, forgive our sins, and heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14):

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses support for proclaiming a year of

National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer;

(2) prays that in this hour of our great need, our Sovereign God will come and do again as He has

done in days gone by;

(3) prays for a time of healing from our

brokenness—broken lives, broken families, broken communities, and broken system;

(4) humbles ourselves, prays, seeks God’s face, turns from our wicked ways, and thanks and praises the God of our ancestors who has given us wisdom and strength and who controls the course of events; and calls upon the people of our Nation to humble ourselves before our Creator and acknowledge our complete dependence upon Him, to repent of our pride and selfishness, and ask the Lord to break our hearts for the things that break His heart; that we may we not miss hearing His voice, and that He will pour out His spirit, once again, on our Nation and leaders.