

Public Law 101-58  
101st Congress

Joint Resolution

July 25, 1989

[H.J. Res. 174]

To designate the decade beginning January 1, 1990, as the "Decade of the Brain".

Whereas it is estimated that fifty million Americans are affected each year by disorders and disabilities that involve the brain, including the major mental illnesses; inherited and degenerative diseases; stroke; epilepsy; addictive disorders; injury resulting from prenatal events, environmental neurotoxins and trauma; and speech, language, hearing and other cognitive disorders;

Whereas it is estimated that treatment, rehabilitation and related costs of disorders and disabilities that affect the brain represents a total economic burden of \$305,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas the people of the Nation should be aware of the exciting research advances on the brain and of the availability of effective treatment of disorders and disabilities that affect the brain;

Whereas a technological revolution occurring in the brain sciences, resulting in such procedures as positron emission tomography and magnetic resonance imaging, permits clinical researchers to observe the living brain noninvasively and in exquisite detail, to define brain systems that are implicated in specific disorders and disabilities, to study complex neuropeptides and behavior as well as to begin to learn about the complex structures underlying memory;

Whereas scientific information on the brain is amassing at an enormous rate, and the field of computer and information sciences has reached a level of sophistication sufficient to handle neuroscience data in a manner that would be maximally useful to both basic researchers and clinicians dealing with brain function and dysfunction;

Whereas advances in mathematics, physics, computational science, and brain imaging technologies have made possible the initiation of significant work in imaging brain function and pathology, modeling neural networks and simulating their dynamic interactions;

Whereas comprehending the reality of the nervous system is still on the frontier of technological innovation requiring a comprehensive effort to decipher how individual neurons, by their collective action, give rise to human intelligence;

Whereas fundamental discoveries at the molecular and cellular levels of the organization of the brain are clarifying the role of the brain in translating neurophysiologic events into behavior, thought, and emotion;

Whereas molecular biology and molecular genetics have yielded strategies effective in preventing several forms of severe mental retardation and are contributing to promising breakthroughs in the study of inheritable neurological disorders, such as Huntington's disease, and mental disorders, such as affective illnesses;

Whereas the capacity to map the biochemical circuitry of neurotransmitters and neuromodulators will permit the rational

- design of potent medications possessing minimal adverse effects that will act on the discrete neurochemical deficits associated with such disorders as Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia and Alzheimer's disease;
- Whereas the incidence of neurologic, psychiatric, psychological, and cognitive disorders and disabilities experienced by older persons will increase in the future as the number of older persons increases;
- Whereas studies of the brain and central nervous system will contribute not only to the relief of neurologic, psychiatric, psychological, and cognitive disorders, but also to the management of fertility and infertility, cardiovascular disease, infectious and parasitic diseases, developmental disabilities and immunologic disorders, as well as to an understanding of behavioral factors that underlie the leading preventable causes of death in this Nation;
- Whereas the central nervous and immune systems are both signaling systems which serve the entire organism, and there are direct connections between the nervous and immune systems, and whereas studies of the modulatory effects of each system on the other will enhance our understanding of diseases as diverse as the major psychiatric disorders, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and autoimmune disorders;
- Whereas recent discoveries have led to fundamental insights as to why people abuse drugs, how abused drugs affect brain function leading to addiction, and how some of these drugs cause permanent brain damage;
- Whereas studies of the brain will contribute to the development of new treatments that will curtail the craving for drugs, break the addictive effects of drugs, prevent the brain-mediated "high" caused by certain abused drugs, and lessen the damage done to the developing minds of babies, who are the innocent victims of drug abuse;
- Whereas treatment for persons with head injury, developmental disabilities, speech, hearing, and other cognitive functions is increasing in availability and effectiveness;
- Whereas the study of the brain involves the multidisciplinary efforts of scientists from such diverse areas as physiology, biochemistry, psychology, psychiatry, molecular biology, anatomy, medicine, genetics, and many others working together toward the common goals of better understanding the structure of the brain and how it affects our development, health, and behavior;
- Whereas the Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology has been awarded to fifteen neuroscientists within the past twenty-five years, an achievement that underscores the excitement and productivity of the study of the brain and central nervous system and its potential for contributing to the health of humanity;
- Whereas the people of the Nation should be concerned with research into disorders and disabilities that affect the brain, and should recognize prevention and treatment of such disorders and disabilities as a health priority; and
- Whereas the declaration of the Decade of the Brain will focus needed government attention on research, treatment, and rehabilitation in this area: Now, therefore, be it
- Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the decade beginning January 1, 1990, hereby is designated the "Decade of the*

Brain", and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon all public officials and the people of the United States to observe such decade with appropriate programs and activities.

Approved July 25, 1989.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 174 (S.J. Res. 173):**

**CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 135 (1989):**

June 29, considered and passed House.

July 13, considered and passed Senate.