

(1) students, who have a right to access a diverse range of stories and perspectives, especially students from historically marginalized backgrounds whose communities are often targeted by thought control measures;

(2) educators and librarians, who are operating in some States in an increasingly punitive and surveillance-oriented environment and are experiencing a chilling effect in their work;

(3) authors whose works are targeted and suppressed;

(4) parents who want their children to attend public schools that remain open to curiosity, discovery, and the freedom to read; and

(5) community members who want free access to a range of uncensored information and knowledge from their public libraries;

Whereas classic and award-winning literature and books that have been part of school curricula for decades have been challenged, removed from libraries pending review, or outright banned from schools, including—

(1) “Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley;

(2) “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood;

(3) “Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Adaptation” adapted by Ari Folman;

(4) “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neal Hurston; and

(5) “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee;

Whereas books, particularly those written by and about outsiders, newcomers, and individuals from marginalized backgrounds, are facing a heightened risk of being banned;

Whereas a substantial number of the instances of books banned or otherwise restricted in the United States have LGBTQ+ characters or themes that recognize the equal humanity and dignity of all individuals despite differences, including—

(1) “And Tango Makes Three” by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell; and

(2) “This Book Is Gay” by Juno Dawson;

Whereas a significant proportion of the instances of books, both fiction and nonfiction, that have been banned or otherwise restricted in the United States are books about race, racism, or feature characters of color, including—

(1) “The Story of Ruby Bridges” by Robert Coles and illustrated by George Ford;

(2) “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.;

(3) “Thank You, Jackie Robinson” by Barbara Cohen;

(4) “Malala: A Hero For All” by Shana Corey;

(5) “Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story” by Kevin Noble Maillard;

(6) “Hair Love” by Matthew A. Cherry;

(7) “Good Trouble: Lessons From the Civil Rights Playbook” by Christopher Noxon; and

(8) “We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures”;

Whereas the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund has reported a dramatic surge in challenges at libraries and schools to the inclusion of graphic novels that depict the diversity of civic life in the United States and the painful and complex history of the human experience, including—

(1) “New Kid” by Jerry Craft;

(2) “Drama” by Raina Telgemeier;

(3) “American Born Chinese” by Gene Luen Yang; and

(4) “Maus” by Art Spiegelman;

Whereas books addressing death, grief, mental illness, and suicide are targeted alongside nonfiction books that discuss feelings and emotions written for teenage and young adult audiences that frequently confront these topics;

Whereas, during congressional hearings on April 7, 2022, May 19, 2022, September 12, 2023,

and October 19, 2023, students, parents, teachers, librarians, and school administrators testified to the chilling and fear-spreading effects that book bans have on education and the school environment; and

Whereas, according to PEN America, from July 2021 to June 2023, over 40 States across the country limited access to certain books for limited or indefinite periods of time, including—

(1) Florida, where at least 1,972 books in total have been banned or restricted in 37 school districts;

(2) Texas, where at least 1,426 books in total have been banned or restricted in 28 school districts;

(3) Pennsylvania, where at least 644 books in total have been banned or restricted in 16 school districts;

(4) Missouri, where at least 360 books in total have been banned or restricted in 16 school districts;

(5) Tennessee, where at least 360 books in total have been banned or restricted in 9 school districts;

(6) Utah, where at least 293 books in total have been banned or restricted in 10 school districts;

(7) South Carolina, where at least 128 books in total have been banned or restricted in 7 school districts;

(8) Virginia, where at least 94 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 6 school districts;

(9) Michigan, where at least 80 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 6 school districts;

(10) North Carolina, where at least 74 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 5 school districts;

(11) Wisconsin, where at least 72 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 12 school districts;

(12) Idaho where at least 51 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 1 school district; and

(13) Oklahoma, where at least 45 books in total have been banned or restricted in at least 3 school districts: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of the week of September 22 through September 28, 2024, as “Banned Books Week”;

(2) expresses concern about the spreading problem of book banning and the proliferating threats to freedom of expression in the United States;

(3) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to supporting the freedom of expression of writers that is protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution and the freedom of all individuals in the United States to read books without government censorship;

(4) calls on local governments and school districts to follow best practice guidelines when addressing challenges to books; and

(5) calls on local governments and school districts to protect the rights of students to learn and the ability of educators and librarians to teach, including by providing students with the opportunity to read a wide array of books reflecting the full breadth and diversity of viewpoints and perspectives.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 858—RECOGNIZING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUTDOOR AFRO

Mr. KING (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mr. PADILLA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 858

Whereas, in 2009, Outdoor Afro started as a blog about nature written by Ms. Rue Mapp,

and has grown into a national not-for-profit network with volunteer leaders in 33 States and the District of Columbia, guiding hundreds of outdoor events each year based on a simple mission to celebrate and inspire Black-American connections to nature through recreational activities, including camping, hiking, birding, fishing, gardening, skiing, biking, camping, environmental education, conservation stewardship, and more;

Whereas, in the past 15 years, Outdoor Afro has cultivated and trained more than 1000 outdoor leaders, led thousands of outdoor events, and engaged well over 150,000 participants;

Whereas Outdoor Afro has disrupted the false perception that Black Americans do not have a relationship with nature and is inspiring access to remote and pristine nature, as well as urban nature, including local parks, trails, and open spaces;

Whereas Outdoor Afro promotes a healthy lifestyle and helps communities find healing, connects to Black history found in natural areas, and inspires an increased desire to protect vulnerable public lands for all to enjoy;

Whereas Outdoor Afro held its first international expedition in 2018 to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania;

Whereas, in response to the disproportionate number of Black children who drown while swimming, Outdoor Afro launched Making Waves, a program to strengthen relationships with water through water safety and swimming lessons provided by certified swim instructors;

Whereas, since its inception, Making Waves has funded nearly 1,950 “Swimmership” scholarships and aims to reach 1,500 new swimmers in 2024;

Whereas Outdoor Afro has engaged millions of people through digital outreach and is changing visual representations of who can connect with and lead in the outdoors through this digital outreach;

Whereas Outdoor Afro’s growing network comprises civically engaged men and women, many of whom plan outdoor activities on behalf of children and senior community members, restoring Black-American leadership in nature;

Whereas Outdoor Afro is a leading voice in the Black-American community for advice on where to recreate, the best outdoor gear to use, and environmental causes that need the greatest attention; and

Whereas October 25, 2024, marks 15 years since the establishment of Outdoor Afro as a community that supports connecting Black Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 15th anniversary of Outdoor Afro; and

(2) commends the leadership of Outdoor Afro for leading the way for inclusion in outdoor recreation and nature for all.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 859—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 2024 AS “NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH”

Mr. KING (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 859

Whereas the theme for National Recovery Month is “Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.”;

Whereas nearly 108,000 individuals in the United States suffered a fatal drug overdose

during 2023, the first annual decrease in drug overdose deaths since 2018;

Whereas overdose deaths involving opioids decreased from an estimated 84,181 in 2022 to 81,083 in 2023;

Whereas overdose deaths from synthetic opioids (primarily fentanyl) decreased in 2023 compared to 2022, but overdose deaths from cocaine and psychostimulants (like methamphetamine) increased;

Whereas, in 2023, there were approximately 22,219,000 adults in the United States who considered themselves to be in recovery from substance use disorder;

Whereas individuals with substance use disorder may face stigma from health professionals as well as from friends and family;

Whereas it has been demonstrated that stigma can be a barrier to accessing treatment and engaging in recovery for individuals with substance use disorder; and

Whereas peer-supported communities offer individuals with substance use disorder better success in recovery by addressing the personal and emotional effects of addiction and easing reintegration: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the importance of patient, provider, and societal education for the prevention of substance use disorder;

(2) supports efforts to explore the means by which integrated care, community, and helping individuals obtain a sense of purpose can lead to effective and sustainable treatment of substance use disorder;

(3) shows appreciation and gratitude for family members, friends, and other individuals who support individuals in recovery from substance use disorder; and

(4) supports the designation of September 2024 as “National Recovery Month”.

# SENATE RESOLUTION 860—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 6, 2024, THROUGH OCTOBER 12, 2024, AS “RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WEEK” TO CELEBRATE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BARASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. HAWLEY, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 860

Whereas the free exercise of religion is an inherent, fundamental, and inalienable right protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Whereas the United States has long recognized that the free exercise of religion is important to the intellectual, ethical, moral, and civic development of individuals in the United States, as evidenced by the Founders of the United States, such as—

(1) Benjamin Franklin, who believed religion to be “uniquely capable of educating a citizenry for democracy”; and

(2) George Washington, who said in his farewell address, “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”;

Whereas religious education is useful for self-development because it asks students to consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life, engages students in questions about morality and justice, and enables students to identify their values;

Whereas studies like the one published by the International Journal of Mental Health Systems in 2019 have shown that religious education can be “instrumental to improving adolescent mental health” by helping children learn how to make decisions based on morals, promoting less risky choices, and encouraging connectedness within a community, which can enhance self-esteem and well-being;

Whereas religious education fosters respect for other religious groups and individuals generally by acknowledging a source for human dignity and worth;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States found in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925), that the State does not have power “to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.”;

Whereas religious instruction can come from a variety of sources, including sectarian schools and released time programs;

Whereas, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2015, 4,350,000 children in the United States attended sectarian elementary and secondary schools where those children received religious education; and

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States held in *Zorach v. Clauson*, 343 U.S. 306 (1952), that State statutes providing for the release of public school students from school to attend religious classes are constitutional, and, as a result, an estimated 540,000 public school students in the United States take advantage of released time programs each year: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) affirms the importance of religious education in the civic and moral development of the people of the United States;

(2) celebrates the schools and organizations that are engaged in religious instruction of the children of the United States to aid those children in intellectual, ethical, moral, and civic development;

(3) calls on each of the 50 States, each territory of the United States, and the District of Columbia to accommodate individuals who wish to be released from public school attendance to attend religious classes; and

(4) designates the week of October 6, 2024, through October 12, 2024, as “Religious Education Week”.

# SENATE RESOLUTION 861—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 2024 AS “SICKLE CELL DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH” IN ORDER TO EDUCATE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES ABOUT SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND THE NEED FOR RESEARCH, EARLY DETECTION METHODS, EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS, AND PREVENTATIVE CARE PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO COMPLICATIONS FROM SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND CONDITIONS RELATED TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. WARREN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 861

Whereas sickle cell disease (referred to in this preamble as “SCD”) is an inherited blood disorder that is a major health problem in the United States and worldwide;

Whereas SCD can result in multiple medical complications, including anemia, jaundice, gallstones, strokes, restricted blood flow, damaged tissue in the liver, spleen, and kidneys, and death;

Whereas SCD causes acute and chronic episodes of severe pain;

Whereas SCD affects an estimated 100,000 individuals in the United States;

Whereas approximately 1,000 babies are born with SCD each year in the United States, with the disease occurring in approximately 1 in 365 newborn Black or African American infants and 1 in 16,300 newborn Hispanic-American infants, and can be found in individuals of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Indian origin;

Whereas more than 3,000,000 individuals in the United States have the sickle cell trait and 1 in 13 Black or African Americans carries the trait;

Whereas there is a 1 in 4 chance that a child born to parents who both have the sickle cell trait will have the disease;

Whereas the life expectancy of an individual with SCD in the United States is often severely limited;

Whereas sickle cell anemia can shorten life expectancy by more than 20 years;

Whereas sickle cell anemia is a common cause of childhood stroke, and, in 2019, fewer than half of children with sickle cell anemia who were 2 to 16 years old received the recommended screening for stroke;

Whereas, in 2019, only 2 in 5 children with sickle cell anemia who were 2 to 9 years old used recommended medication that can prevent sickle cell anemia complications;

Whereas, in 2020, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine developed a comprehensive strategic plan and blueprint for action to address sickle cell disease, which, among other things, cited the need for new innovative therapies as well as the need to address barriers that may impact delivery of and access to approved treatments;

Whereas, while hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (commonly known as “HSCT”) is currently the only cure for SCD and advances in treating the associated complications of SCD have occurred, more research is needed to find widely available