

Public Law 103-301  
103d Congress

Joint Resolution

Aug. 19, 1994  
[S.J. Res. 178]

To proclaim the week of October 16 through October 22, 1994, as  
"National Character Counts Week".

- Whereas young people will be the stewards of our communities, Nation, and world in critical times, and the present and future well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good character;
- Whereas concerns about the character training of children have taken on a new sense of urgency as violence by and against youth threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the Nation;
- Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions and civic groups;
- Whereas the character of a Nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;
- Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character, and that character counts in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;
- Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by youth-influencing institutions and individuals to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;
- Whereas character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, efforts by faith communities, schools, and youth, civic and human service organizations also play a very important role in supporting family efforts by fostering and promoting good character;
- Whereas the Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth and community leaders to recognize the valuable role our youth play in the present and future of our Nation, and to recognize that character is an important part of that future;
- Whereas, in July 1992, the Aspen Declaration was written by an eminent group of educators, youth leaders and ethics scholars for the purpose of articulating a coherent framework for character education appropriate to a diverse and pluralistic society;
- Whereas the Aspen Declaration states that "Effective character education is based on core ethical values which form the foundation of democratic society";
- Whereas the core ethical values identified by the Aspen Declaration constitute the Six Core Elements of Character;

Whereas these Six Core Elements of Character are—

- (1) trustworthiness;
- (2) respect;
- (3) responsibility;
- (4) justice and fairness;
- (5) caring; and
- (6) civic virtue and citizenship.

Whereas these Six Core Elements of Character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the Aspen Declaration states that “The character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society; therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model the core ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character.”;

Whereas the Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those who have an interest in the education and training of our youth, to adopt these Six Core Elements of Character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society as a whole; and

Whereas the Congress encourages communities, especially schools and youth organizations, to integrate these Six Core Elements of Character into programs serving students and children: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the week of October 16 through October 22, 1994, is designated as “National Character Counts Week”, and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States and interested groups to embrace these Six Core Elements of Character and to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.*

Approved August 19, 1994.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 178:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 140 (1994):  
June 24, considered and passed Senate.  
Aug. 5, considered and passed House.