

112TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 721

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that bolstering literacy among African-American and Hispanic men is an urgent national priority.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 29, 2012

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that bolstering literacy among African-American and Hispanic men is an urgent national priority.

Whereas literacy is a vital skill for survival in the United States;

Whereas literacy is an essential tool for exercising active citizenship and holding government officials accountable;

Whereas universal literacy is a necessity for United States competitiveness in the global economy;

Whereas illiteracy is highly correlated with imprisonment, given that 56 percent of United States adults in prison or jail in 2008 were deemed to have very low literacy skills according to the National Commission on Adult Literacy;

Whereas illiteracy can be considered a major factor giving rise to the phenomenon commonly referred to as the school-to-prison-pipeline;

Whereas according to the most recent national assessment of adult literacy, 34,000,000 adults function at below basic literacy levels;

Whereas according to the Department of Education, 20 percent of African-Americans and 39 percent of Hispanics function at below basic literacy levels;

Whereas only 47 percent of African-American males and 44 percent of Hispanic males graduate from high school;

Whereas 45 percent of adult literacy students at community-based organizations are prime working age people between the ages of 25 and 44;

Whereas according to a July 2006 report in Stanford Magazine, an increase in the percentage of poverty-stricken students in a school is associated with the decline in performance on literacy tests;

Whereas illiteracy is an intergenerational problem, as the children of illiterate parents are less likely to receive the support they need to attain reading proficiency;

Whereas Federal, State, municipal, and community-based literacy programs have been able to reach a small proportion of the total illiterate population; and

Whereas 74 percent of community-based organizations focused on adult literacy have waiting lists: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1           (1) recognizes illiteracy as a national crisis,  
2           which disproportionately affects African-American  
3           and Hispanic males;

4           (2) affirms the goal of reducing adult illiteracy  
5           by 50 percent in these target populations and by 25  
6           percent throughout the United States in the coming  
7           decade;

8           (3) encourages local, State, and Federal agen-  
9           cies as well as the private sector to take on literacy  
10          promotion initiatives in an effort to resolve this cri-  
11          sis;

12          (4) encourages Federal agencies and private  
13          firms to support community-based organization pro-  
14          grams and the use of trained volunteers to work  
15          with the target populations; and

16          (5) encourages the establishment of local part-  
17          nerships among service providers to better meet the  
18          needs of adult learners.

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