

SR-220, As Adopted by Senate, September 18, 2008

Senators Barcia and Bishop offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 220.

A resolution supporting civic education and observing September 14-20, 2008, as America's Legislators Back to School Week.

Whereas, Michigan was created as a representative democracy in which all governmental power is inherent in the people who exercise that power through the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and

Whereas, In recent years, as a result of a lack of understanding and deteriorating faith in the merits and knowledge required for a successful republican form of government, citizen interest in government and comprehension of the political system has declined; and

Whereas, Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence stated, "There is but one method of rendering a republican form of government durable, and that is by disseminating the seeds of virtue and knowledge through every part of the state by means of proper places and modes of education and this can be done effectively only by the aid of the legislature"; and

Whereas, The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) adopted a resolution that declares that citizens all too often maintain little understanding of the functions of the state legislatures and the roles of individuals, and public awareness and comprehension of the institutions and procedure of the government is an imperative step to developing public trust and confidence; and

Whereas, The NCSL resolution also states that state legislatures need to increase understanding of the notion of representative democracy, and education regarding representative democracy should highlight the significance of compromise and cooperation and the complexity of resolving competing interests present in our society; and

Whereas, Civic education is a fundamental instrument in endorsing an improved understanding of the legislative institution and the role of legislators in representative democracy; and

Whereas, NCSL encourages the nation's state legislators to promote civic education about representative democracy; and

Whereas, NCSL established America's Legislators Back to School Week, a national event where state legislators across the nation visit schools and classrooms to teach students of all ages and grade levels about the practices and objectives of the Legislature, as well as to observe activities in the schools; and

Whereas, Legislators will benefit from interacting with students, teachers, and administrators; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body support civic education to promote an enhanced understanding of the legislative institution and the role of legislators in representative democracy; and be it further

Resolved, That the Michigan Senate declares that the third week in September, September 14-20, 2008, shall be designated as Michigan Legislators Back to School Week and urges all members of the Legislature to visit schools during that week.