

By: Wilson

H.R. No. 308

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The First Amendment of the United States
2 Constitution provides for freedom of speech and personal expression
3 as vital individual liberties necessary to the maintenance of a
4 free and just society; and

5 WHEREAS, The Fort Worth Independent School District violated
6 this fundamental right of self-expression when it suspended a
7 graduating senior, Terry Carter, from school, initially for 90
8 days, and on reconsideration for 10 days, for the performance in his
9 theater-arts class on January 30, 2003, of an extra-credit poem he
10 wrote for a school contest; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Carter has an exemplary record of academic
12 achievement and community service; he is an honors student ranked
13 sixth in his 186-member class at Fort Worth's Dunbar High School and
14 is president of King's Kids, a nationally prominent Fort
15 Worth-based youth organization that specializes in dramatic
16 recitations of the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Carter possesses an unblemished history of
18 personal conduct esteemed by his teachers, fellow students, and the
19 community; and

20 WHEREAS, Such suspension will cause Mr. Carter to miss his
21 senior prom, class picnic, and graduation ceremonies, as well as
22 disrupt the rhythm of course work at a critical time in his
23 secondary education and possibly interfere with his plans for a
24 college education; and

1 WHEREAS, Punishing a student for the content of his speech in
2 an unduly harsh manner offends the basic liberties enumerated in
3 the United States Constitution and held dear by our citizenry; now,
4 therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas
6 Legislature censure the Fort Worth Independent School District for
7 the excessive discipline of Terry Carter in regard to his
8 performance of his poem; and, be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Fort Worth Independent School District
10 review this case and reconsider its decision to suspend Terry
11 Carter.