

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION - A CALL TO
CIVILITY**

2009 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John L. Valentine

House Sponsor: Kevin S. Garn

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor urges the people of Utah to return to fundamental principles that will lead to greater civility and respectful public discourse.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ urges the people of Utah to return to fundamental principles that will lead to greater civility and a new spirit of community; and
- ▶ invites all Utahns to join the Legislature and the Governor in affirming established ground rules for respectful public discourse and behavior.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, the Utah Constitution, Article I, Section 27 states, "Frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is essential to the security of individual rights and perpetuity of free government";

WHEREAS, the Utah Constitution, Article I, Section 1 observes that, among our "inherent and inalienable" constitutional rights is the fundamental right "to communicate freely



28 about our thoughts and opinions";

29 WHEREAS, we may also be "responsible for the abuse of that right";

30 WHEREAS, there should be a renewal of respectful discourse and behavior in civic and
31 public settings in Utah;

32 WHEREAS, this is not an appeal for all citizens of the state simply to get along;

33 WHEREAS, there are profound differences among Utahns, and spirited debate is a vital
34 part of American democracy;

35 WHEREAS, participation in American civic and public life does not require that we
36 sacrifice our deepest convictions but that we best protect our own rights by protecting the rights
37 of others and adhering to high ethical standards;

38 WHEREAS, the following ground rules of civic and public engagement recognize the
39 important place of the rights, responsibilities, and respect inherent in our civic and
40 constitutional compact;

41 WHEREAS, it is vital that the importance of rights and the dignity of each individual
42 be remembered;

43 WHEREAS, our society is founded upon the proposition that all people are born free
44 and equal in dignity and rights, and that freedom of conscience and expression is at the
45 foundation of our rights;

46 WHEREAS, each of us should be responsible both in the exercise of our rights and in
47 protecting the rights of others;

48 WHEREAS, especially on matters of personal faith, claims of conscience, and human
49 rights, public policy should seek solutions that are fair to all;

50 WHEREAS, all people, especially our leaders and the media, should demonstrate a
51 commitment to be respectful in discourse and behavior, particularly in civic and public forums;

52 WHEREAS, respect should also be shown by being honest and as inclusive as possible,
53 by mindfully listening to and attempting to understand the concerns of others, by valuing their
54 opinions even when there is disagreement, and by addressing their concerns when possible;

55 WHEREAS, public discourse can be passionate while maintaining mutual respect that
56 reaches beyond differing opinions;

57 WHEREAS, intimidation, ridicule, personal attacks, mean spiritedness, reprisals
58 against those who disagree, and other disrespectful or unethical behaviors destroy the fabric of

59 society and should not be tolerated;

60 WHEREAS, those who engage in this behavior should be brought to light, held
61 accountable, and should no longer enjoy the public's trust;

62 WHEREAS, the social compact "of the people" and "by the people" is "for the people,"
63 and each person has a responsibility to build community; and

64 WHEREAS, on divisive issues, areas of common ground should first be explored, and
65 effort should be given to build broad-based agreement, giving due regard to the concerns of
66 minority points of view:

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
68 Governor concurring therein, being concerned about growing incivility in our civic and public
69 settings, urge the people of Utah to return to fundamental principles that will lead to greater
70 civility and a new spirit of community and invite all Utahns to join us in affirming established
71 ground rules for respectful public discourse and behavior.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be posted on the Internet
73 websites of the Legislature and the Governor.

Legislative Review Note
as of 12-22-08 3:05 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

S.C.R. 2 - Concurrent Resolution - a Call to Civility

Fiscal Note

2009 General Session

State of Utah

State Impact

Enactment of this bill will not require additional appropriations.

Individual, Business and/or Local Impact

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable costs and/or benefits for individuals, businesses, or local governments.
