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**AB-501 State fabric.** (2015-2016)

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**Assembly Bill No. 501**

**CHAPTER 873**

An act to add Section 423.6 to the Government Code, relating to state emblems.

[ Approved by Governor September 30, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 2016. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 501, Levine. State fabric.

Existing law declares the official state animal, rock, mineral, grass, insect, bird, and marine fish, among other things.

This bill would make denim the official state fabric.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Denim is a sturdy cotton twill fabric. To create denim fabric, horizontal threads pass under two or more vertical threads. However, denim is much more than just a fabric. Denim's history is interwoven with California history from the 1850s through today.

(b) Since the 17th century through the present day, denim has been used to make upholstery, tents, blankets, wagon covers, and of course, pants known as jeans.

(c) Denim jeans were invented in San Francisco during the Gold Rush Era, and in May 1873, the United States Patent and Trademark Office approved patent number 139,121 for the invention of jeans.

(d) The history of denim jeans parallels the history of California. At first, jeans were designed as practical working clothes. They eventually became a symbol of American culture. Jeans have been worn by gold miners, cowboys, farm workers, rock stars, beatniks, hippies, and people of all walks of life. Jeans were featured in the first Hollywood silent films and became an iconic costume in a variety of genres, especially westerns and war films.

(e) Today, California is responsible for about 75 percent of the premium denim jeans sold throughout the world. The industry employs more than 200,000 people in southern California alone, making it the largest fashion manufacturing hub in the United States. Denim jeans can be found in the wardrobes of 96 percent of American consumers who, on average, own seven pairs. Denim jeans represent an estimated \$60 billion global market for retailers.

(f) Celebrities, music artists, models, business people, and Californians of all ages continue to wear denim. Jeans have become the uniform for several companies in the technology industry in Silicon Valley. Prominent technology companies developed genius innovations while working in a garage wearing comfortable denim jeans.

(g) The cotton industry is vital to the production of denim jeans. In California, cotton is grown primarily in the San Joaquin Valley, but there is acreage in both the Palos Verde and Sacramento Valleys. During the 2015 crop year, over 800 California producers grew cotton and 29 California gins ginned over 700,000 bales of cotton. One bale of cotton can generate 325 pairs of denim jeans. In 2015 there were 743 cotton businesses operating in California, providing employment to 10,049 California residents and generating revenues of \$1.4 billion.

(h) Through corporate social responsibility initiatives, companies spread awareness about gender equality, climate change, fair trade, workplace equality, and a variety of other contemporary issues.

(i) Several denim companies are now looking into the future and making sustainability a core principle of its business model. California's denim industry has worked to shrink its carbon and water footprints.

(j) In order to supply denim companies with cotton, the cotton growers are working to become more sustainable by using responsible production methods on their farms. Some of the positive benefits of these efforts include a decrease in soil erosion, irrigation water, energy use, and greenhouse gas emission. Additionally, Cotton Incorporated — the research and promotion company for the upland variety of cotton — has a United States program called Blue Jeans Go Green that recycles unwanted denim. Both denim and cotton companies are conscious of their environmental impact, especially within the State of California.

**SEC. 2.** Section 423.6 is added to the Government Code, to read:

**423.6.** Denim is the official state fabric.