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ACR-144 Public schools: character education. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144

CHAPTER 84

Relative to character education in public schools.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 11, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 144, Mullin. Public schools: character education.

This measure would urge the State Board of Education, county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis on character, citizenship, ethics, and the humane treatment of living creatures in order to promote a humane and compassionate society.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, California's interest in character education has been progressing since the 1980s, when Senator Albert Rodda initiated a select bipartisan committee on character education, and interest has since been further advanced by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, presidents of the United States, and, more recently, by state legislative and congressional leaders; and

WHEREAS, Section 233.5 of the Education Code authorizes the provisions of character education, and requires each teacher, among other things, to endeavor to promote kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures; and

WHEREAS, Increasingly, the need for kindness toward animals, whether they are pets, farm animals, or creatures in the wild, has come to play a guiding role in the broader movement for a healthy and humane world; and

WHEREAS, All children deserve the privilege of learning about animals, which fosters a sense of caring and is crucial in developing a sense of civic responsibility and a more humane community; and

WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics are essential to developing an inclusive society, restoring public confidence in our institutions, and preparing literate, skilled, and responsible participants in our schools, government, workplaces, and local communities; and

WHEREAS, Character education addresses common virtues and behaviors that support respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, justice, fairness, caring, giving, service, leadership, initiative, and teamwork; and

WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics also relate to the closing of the academic achievement and participation gaps that currently exist between pupils in our public schools; and

WHEREAS, Implementing California's Common Core academic content standards may be enhanced by character education by increasing commitment to instructional priorities, academic rigor, and discipline, and may improve school performance and provide the opportunity for full citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics begin with good role models and leadership in our homes, communities, and schools; and

WHEREAS, The character, citizenship, and ethics that are expected in our society and government, and the rights, responsibilities, and participation of citizens should be a continual and meaningful part of character education for every pupil in prekindergarten through grade 12; and

WHEREAS, The importance of character, citizenship, and ethics cannot be overestimated in establishing a positive school climate for pupils, and is the shared responsibility of the entire education community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature urges the State Board of Education, county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis on character, citizenship, ethics, and the humane treatment of living creatures in order to promote a humane and compassionate society; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, boards of education and administrators of county offices and school districts, and to the author for distribution.