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SCR-104 Black April Memorial Month. (2015-2016)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 104

CHAPTER 46

Relative to Black April Memorial Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 24, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 104, Nguyen. Black April Memorial Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of April 2016 as Black April Memorial Month.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, April 30, 2016, marks the 41st year since the Fall of Saigon, on April 30, 1975, to communism; and

WHEREAS, For many Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who were directly involved in the war and Vietnamese Americans who have settled in the United States, the Vietnam War was a tragedy full of great suffering and loss of American, Vietnamese, and Southeast Asian lives; and

WHEREAS, The combined United States and South Vietnamese fatalities among servicemen and women during the Vietnam War reached more than a half million, with approximately 800,000 additional troops being wounded in combat. Millions of Vietnamese civilians suffered casualties and death as a result of the extended conflict; and

WHEREAS, After the Fall of Saigon, millions of Vietnamese and their families fled Vietnam to surrounding areas and the United States, including, but not limited to, former military personnel, government officials, and those who had worked for the United States during the war; and

WHEREAS, In the late 1970s to mid-1980s, thousands of Vietnamese risked their lives by fleeing Vietnam aboard small wooden boats. These emigrants reached refugee camps in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong, while approximately one-half of the people fleeing Vietnam in search of freedom and democracy perished at sea; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census for 2010, more than 580,000 Vietnamese live in California, with the largest concentration of Vietnamese residents found outside of Vietnam residing in the County of Orange; and

WHEREAS, Human rights, religious freedom, democracy, and protection against threats of aggression are important concerns of Vietnamese Americans and Vietnamese communities worldwide stemming from human rights abuses that continue to occur in Vietnam in the following areas, among others, child labor, human trafficking, religious and political persecution, suppression of the press, unlawful deprivation of life, forced disappearances, and land seizure; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 United States Department of State's Report on Human Rights Practices in Vietnam estimates 125 political detainees are being held, and the International Labor Rights Forum reports that mistreatment has continued at reeducation centers, including forcing detainees to produce goods for private companies; and

WHEREAS, We must teach our children and future generations important lessons from the Vietnam War and the continuing situation in Vietnam, including how the plight of the Vietnamese refugees following the end of the war serves as a powerful example of the values of freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, We, the people of California, should actively rededicate ourselves to the principles of human rights, individual freedom, sovereignty, and equal protection under the laws of a just and democratic world. Californians should set aside moments of time every year on April 30 to give remembrance to the soldiers, medical personnel, and civilians who died during the Vietnam War in pursuit of freedom and democracy; and

WHEREAS, Vietnamese American communities throughout California will commemorate April 30, 2016, as Black April, a day of remembrance and rededication to the principles of freedom, including freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of press, and Internet freedom; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That in recognition of the great tragedy and suffering and lives lost during the Vietnam War, the month of April 2016 shall be proclaimed Black April Memorial Month, a special time for Californians to remember the lives lost during the Vietnam War era, and to hope for a more humane and just life for the people of Vietnam; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.