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ACR-134 Gang Awareness and Prevention Month. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 134

CHAPTER 2

Relative to Gang Awareness and Prevention Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 07, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 134, Eduardo Garcia. Gang Awareness and Prevention Month.

This measure would designate the month of January 2018 as Gang Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of California and would encourage cities and constituents across the state to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to prevent future gang activity and honor those who lost their lives due to gang activity.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Gang violence is responsible for an average of 2,000 gang-related homicides each year, according to 2007 to 2012 data from the National Youth Gang Center, which causes a concern for Californians everywhere; and

WHEREAS, The solution to gang violence is found in the acknowledgment that gangs exist, pose a real and present danger to public safety, ruin lives, destroy families, target youth who are vulnerable, and can take the lives of innocent victims unaffiliated with gang activity; and

WHEREAS, Californians everywhere must work together to ensure first responders do not have to respond to crime scenes and dying victims in dangerous surroundings where they can become the next target; and

WHEREAS, Local communities need to learn and understand that gang affiliation and activity is preventable. The solution to gang violence is within every Californian. Californians have the will, courage, and inner strength to stand up to their moral obligation as citizens of their community to help by deterring youth and their families from violence by educating them how to form stronger family bonds. Everyone has the potential leadership skills, creativity, and determination to guide those communities that have been afflicted with generations of gang culture to an alternative path by partnering with youth gang intervention programs that would create change for the betterment of their future and in the fight for a gang-free community; and

WHEREAS, The Mothers & Men Against Gangs Coalition (MAG Coalition) is an example of an organization formed to prevent gang activity by providing awareness to diminish gang violence throughout the State of California; and

WHEREAS, MAG Coalition was founded in January 2013 by the Garza family and the community of a young innocent teenager, Martin Alberto Garza, who lost his life due to senseless gang violence but whose legacy is changing lives; and

WHEREAS, It is essential to continue to work together by actively organizing events to prevent gang violence and to encourage entities to be involved in gang prevention education that can influence the youth through outreach presentations, teaching the

principles of nonviolence, establish programs that will have continuity as times change, and organize events in order to help diminish the number of gang-related crimes and deaths; and

WHEREAS, Californians realize it is evident that prevention efforts add immeasurably to the health and safety of their communities and should be encouraged and supported by all essential community groups. Californians everywhere will stand together and honor those who have lost their lives due to gang activity, use their legacy to bond together, use their story to voice awareness, and ultimately create a paradigm shift in the minds of their youth and their families. Each Californian has a right to live in a safe gang-free neighborhood without fearing for his or her life or his or her family members' lives. Concerned parents, youth, community groups, businesses, churches, and educators should accept this challenge to stop gangs by building a better future for their children and for the nation and protect the right to live safe and free; and

WHEREAS, The State of California expresses its strong public support for all gang awareness and prevention efforts underway across the state and appreciates the work being done by groups and individuals to rid their communities of gangs and change lives by advocating for safer communities and fostering gang prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, Gang Awareness and Prevention Month is an initial step to rid our communities of gangs, change lives, and teach students how to organize peacefully like the leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of January 2018 as Gang Awareness and Prevention Month in the State of California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages cities and constituents across the state to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to prevent future gang activity and honor those who lost their lives due to gang activity; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.