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**ACR-177 Intergenerational trauma: epigenetics.** (2017-2018)

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**Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 177**

**CHAPTER 121**

Relative to intergenerational trauma.

[ Filed with Secretary of State July 10, 2018. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

ACR 177, Jones-Sawyer. Intergenerational trauma: epigenetics.

This measure would encourage awareness that intergenerational trauma, which has been identified through epigenetic study, may have impact on outcomes of certain citizens of California.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Researchers have identified that our genes carry evidence of extreme trauma experienced by our ancestors; and

WHEREAS, New scientific research suggests that the negative effects of trauma can be inherited and parents may actually transfer the consequences of experiencing intense psychological trauma to their children via an epigenetic process; and

WHEREAS, Our genes are covered with a layer that holds the memory of trauma experienced by our ancestors and can influence how we react to trauma and stress; and

WHEREAS, The impact of traumatic experiences may be epigenetically inherited via molecular memory that is passed down through generations; and

WHEREAS, This emerging scientific field of epigenetics is discovering that trauma is being passed down to future generations through more than simply learned behaviors; and

WHEREAS, A study examining the DNA of Holocaust survivors and their children found similar variations from the norm in both generations for the gene associated with depression and anxiety disorders. The findings imply children of individuals who experience profound stress in life may be more likely to develop stress or anxiety disorders themselves; and

WHEREAS, The pattern, known as epigenetic change because it affects the chemical marker for the gene rather than the gene itself, suggests that profound stress in the older generation translated into an adaptation that passed on to the next generation; and

WHEREAS, Scientists have long known that parents pass genetic traits down to their children, but recent research suggests that life experiences can also produce chemical effects in DNA; and

WHEREAS, Similar research has been done into the effects of famine on later generations, as well as stress levels in the children of women who survived the September 11, 2001, attacks; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans, whose ancestors are survivors of a holocaust and were shipped off to boarding schools, where they were raised in a harsh environment with no compassion, no empathy, and no love, or African Americans, whose ancestors survived the brutality of slavery, or Chinese people whose grandparents lived through the ravages of the Cultural Revolution, all carry with them more than just memories. Their DNA holds the traumatic history of their ancestors; and

WHEREAS, The new insights of behavioral epigenetics, traumatic experiences in our past, or in our recent ancestors' past, leave molecular scars adhering to our DNA; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature encourages awareness that intergenerational trauma, which has been identified through epigenetic study, may have an impact on the outcomes of certain citizens of California; and be it further

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