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**SCR-31 California Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day.** (2017-2018)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31**

**CHAPTER 87**

Relative to California Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day.

[ Filed with Secretary of State June 27, 2017. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 31, Pan. California Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day.

This measure would declare June 6, 2017, as California Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Transverse myelitis is a neurological disorder with an estimated 1,400 new cases diagnosed in the United States each year, affecting 2 to 5 persons per million, but transverse myelitis is not widely recognized by the general public as being a significant and serious neurological disorder affecting the spinal cord; and

WHEREAS, Transverse myelitis is a devastating condition, affecting the neurological system by targeting the covering nerve cell fibers and myelin, and causing the spinal cord to become inflamed; and

WHEREAS, Symptoms of transverse myelitis include a loss of spinal cord function over several hours or several weeks with what usually begins as a sudden onset of lower back pain, muscle weakness, or abnormal sensations in the toes and feet that can rapidly progress to more severe symptoms including paralysis urinary retention and loss of bowel control; and

WHEREAS, Additional symptoms of transverse myelitis include severe neurological pain, muscle weakness, abnormal sensations, and numbness of the lower extremities, as well as possible progression to sensory loss, and cognitive issues; and

WHEREAS, Transverse myelitis may occur in isolation or in the setting of another illness, and idiopathic transverse myelitis is assumed to be a result of abnormal and excessive activation of an immune response against the spinal cord that results in inflammation and tissue damage; and

WHEREAS, Transverse myelitis often develops in the setting of viral and bacterial infections, especially those which may be associated with a rash (e.g., rubeola, varicella, variola, rubella, influenza, and mumps); and

WHEREAS, Experts believe that in many cases infection causes a derangement of the immune system, which leads to an indirect autoimmune attack on the spinal cord, rather than a direct attack by the organism; and

WHEREAS, Myelitis related to cancer is uncommon but there are several reports in the medical literature of a severe myelitis occurring in association with a malignancy; and

WHEREAS, In addition, there are a growing number of reports of cases of myelopathy associated with cancer in which the immune system produces an antibody to fight off the cancer and this cross-reacts with the molecules in the spinal cord neurons, although it should be emphasized that this is an unusual cause of myelitis; and

WHEREAS, Vascular causes are noted because they present with the same problems as transverse myelitis; however, this is really a distinct problem primarily due to inadequate blood flow to the spinal cord instead of actual inflammation; and

WHEREAS, Transverse myelitis is often overlooked; and

WHEREAS, Recovery from transverse myelitis may be difficult, requiring months of treatment, and only one-third of patients diagnosed with transverse myelitis, through drugs and therapy, are able to make an almost full recovery, and two-thirds of patients deal with severe symptoms or even complete paraplegia or quadriplegia and possibly death caused by complications from transverse myelitis; and

WHEREAS, If this condition were more widely recognized, diagnosis and further scientific research would benefit those individuals who live with this condition; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares June 6, 2017, as California Transverse Myelitis Awareness Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature supports legislation and policies that educate the public and medical community about transverse myelitis, support adults and children living with transverse myelitis with increased research and improving treatment and therapies, and provide assistance and resources for the families and caregivers of individuals living with transverse myelitis; and be it further

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