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SCR-50 International Midwives' Day. (2017-2018)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50

CHAPTER 86

Relative to International Midwives' Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 21, 2017.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 50, Skinner. International Midwives' Day.

This measure would recognize May 5, 2017, as International Midwives' Day.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Midwives save lives; well-trained midwives may help avert nearly two-thirds of all maternal and newborn deaths, according to the United Nations Population Fund's reference to the most recent State of the World's Midwifery report; and

WHEREAS, Midwives could also deliver 87 percent of all essential sexual, reproductive, maternal, and newborn health services, but only 42 percent of individuals with midwifery skills work in the 73 countries in which more than 90 percent of all maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths occur; and

WHEREAS, The world has seen a steady decline in maternal and newborn deaths since 1990, but hundreds of thousands of women and newborns still die each year during pregnancy and childbirth; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 303,000 women and 2.7 million newborn babies died in 2015 alone and the vast majority of those who lost their lives did so due to complications and illnesses that could have been prevented had they had the proper prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care services provided by midwives; and

WHEREAS, Midwives do not only deliver babies, but also provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, and they assume a critical role in promoting health within communities; and

WHEREAS, Midwives, as members of their communities, also provide culturally sensitive care that is likely to have more of a lasting impact on those that they serve; and

WHEREAS, Midwives, and those with midwifery skills, are the primary caregivers for women and their children during pregnancy, labor, childbirth, and in the postdelivery period; and

WHEREAS, A well-trained midwife also can provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, including prenatal care, safe delivery care, and postpartum and postnatal care; and

WHEREAS, Midwives also provide family planning services and counseling, and they can perform breast and cervical cancer screenings; and

WHEREAS, Midwives, if authorized by their countries, additionally can perform basic emergency obstetric care, and in humanitarian crises and emergencies can help implement the minimum initial services package needed for reproductive health care services; and

WHEREAS, Midwives also do much to advance the human rights of women and girls; by providing information and counseling, they can help prevent female genital mutilation; they also can offer support and assistance to survivors of gender-based violence, and they can provide reproductive health services to adolescents who are often denied access to these services at great expense to their health and rights; and

WHEREAS, Midwives, when they are properly trained and supported, provide one of the most cost-effective and culturally sensitive ways of achieving universal health care; yet, midwives are in such short supply in many developing countries, and often lack the skills and a supportive environment in which to perform their jobs well; and the deficits in midwives are highest in the areas where the needs are the greatest; and

WHEREAS, Many challenges exist to increasing the supply of midwifery services; despite the enormous responsibilities they assume, midwives—who are overwhelmingly women—often endure poor pay, low status, and a lack of support; and

WHEREAS, International Midwives' Day serves to remind us all that midwives do save lives, prevent maternal and newborn deaths, avert complications and preventable deaths and illnesses, and advance human rights; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby recognizes May 5, 2017, as International Midwives' Day; and be it further

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