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SCR-55 Purple Heart Day. (2017-2018)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 55

CHAPTER 176

Relative to Purple Heart Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 22, 2017.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 55, Newman. Purple Heart Day.

This measure would declare August 7, 2017, as Purple Heart Day in California.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who are killed or wounded in action; and

WHEREAS, Created in 1932, the Purple Heart has a long storied past that dates back to the founding fathers of the United States. The award takes its design from the Badge of Military Merit, which was commissioned by General George Washington on August 7, 1782. This award consisted of a purple, heart-shaped piece of silk having a narrow edge of silver stitched with the word Merit across the face and is considered to be the first official military combat badge of the Armed Forces. The official successor decoration of the Badge of Military Merit is the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, Originally, the Purple Heart award was only open to the United States Army and Air Force service members and could not be awarded posthumously. President Franklin D. Roosevelt changed that in 1942 with an executive order that opened the award to members of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Later that year, in a separate order, the award was made available for posthumous award to any member of the military; and

WHEREAS, To date, approximately two million Purple Heart Medals have been awarded. The award can be awarded retroactively to a soldier as far back as 1917, allowing veterans from World War I to be eligible; and

WHEREAS, Originally, the Purple Heart was awarded for meritorious service, and injury was a consideration for merit. In 1942, the creation of the Legion of Merit award duplicated the merit requirement, which became unnecessary for the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, From 1942 to 1997, civilians serving in, or affiliated with, the Armed Forces were eligible to receive the Purple Heart. Some of the earliest civilians to receive this honor were firefighters wounded or killed while fighting fires caused by the attack on Pearl Harbor; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature encourages all Californians to honor those who have served in the Armed Forces, especially those who have been wounded and received the Purple Heart, and declares August 7, 2017, as Purple Heart Day in California; and be it further

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