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ACR-142 Korean American Day. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 142

CHAPTER 3

Relative to Korean American Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 11, 2020.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 142, Choi. Korean American Day.

This measure would proclaim January 13, 2020, as Korean American Day.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, On January 13, 1903, the history of Korean immigration to America began when 102 courageous Korean adults and children landed in the State of Hawaii after venturing across the vast Pacific Ocean aboard the S.S. Gaelic; and

WHEREAS, The hopes of these Korean immigrants for America, the land of opportunity, were quickly hindered by social, economic, and language barriers of unforeseen magnitude; and

WHEREAS, These Korean immigrants did not falter in their pursuit of the American dream. Through perseverance and sacrifice, they established a new home in a new land and educated their children; and

WHEREAS, Between 1904 and 1907, approximately 1,000 Korean Americans entered the United States mainland from the State of Hawaii through San Francisco, where the first Korean American political organizations and Korean language publications were established; and

WHEREAS, Many Korean Americans left San Francisco, primarily to become farmworkers. Some Korean Americans combined their money and resources to lease farmland near the towns of Dinuba and Reedley in the San Joaquin Valley and in the Sacramento Valley. Dozens of other Korean Americans served as wage laborers for mining companies and as section hands on the railroads in the States of Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington; and

WHEREAS, The Japanese occupation of Korea prevented further Korean immigration into the United States. However, many Korean Americans desired to establish families in the United States, despite the new limitations on immigration. As a result, a picture spouse system was established, which delivered approximately 1,000 new Korean immigrants to the State of Hawaii, and 100 more to the Pacific Coast of the United States mainland, before 1924; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco remained the center of the Korean American community during this period, but there was a gradual migration of Korean Americans from San Francisco, and the surrounding rural areas, to southern California. As more employment opportunities opened up, a new, burgeoning community of Korean Americans began to thrive in the Los Angeles area; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is currently home to the largest population of Korean Americans in the entire United States, with more than 250,000 Korean Americans; and

WHEREAS, Koreatown within the City of Los Angeles played a crucial role in supporting the Korean American community within California as it struggled to establish itself; and

WHEREAS, While the first Korean immigrants to the United States fought and sacrificed to establish themselves, their children grew up to be patriotic citizens, many of whom went on to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II and to make other important contributions to mainstream American society; and

WHEREAS, The 1965 amendments to the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (Public Law 89-236) opened the door for a new wave of Korean immigrants to enter the United States. Since its enactment, Korean Americans have become one of the fastest growing groups of Asian Americans in the United States. In 1960, approximately 25,000 people of Korean ancestry lived in the United States, but by 1970, that number had increased to 69,130. By 1980, the number of people of Korean ancestry living in the United States had increased over fivefold to 354,593, and, by 1990, that number more than doubled, increasing to 798,849. In 2010, it was estimated that 1,706,822 people with some Korean ancestry lived in the United States, representing more than a 67-fold increase since 1960; and

WHEREAS, With diligence, fortitude, and an enduring belief in the American dream, Korean immigrants have helped to turn emergent areas within the State of California into thriving and respectable communities, while raising their children to be productive Korean Americans; and

WHEREAS, Korean Americans have become an integral part of mainstream American society and have made important contributions as Californians in the fields of finance, technology, law, medicine, education, sports, media, the arts, the military, and government, as well as other areas; and

WHEREAS, As the Korean American community prepares for a new era and creates new history, Korean Americans must instill in younger generations the proper appreciation for the courage and values of their forefathers, a deep sense of their roots, and pride in their own cultural heritage so that they may better contribute to the great State of California, which is rich with ethnic and cultural diversity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims January 13, 2020, as Korean American Day; and be it further

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