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ACR-79 Amelia Earhart Memorial Highway. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 79

CHAPTER 121

Relative to the Amelia Earhart Memorial Highway.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 19, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 79, Nazarian. Amelia Earhart Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate a specified portion of State Highway Route 101 and State Highway Route 134 in the County of Los Angeles as the Amelia Earhart Memorial Highway. The measure would request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, Amelia Earhart was born on July 24, 1897, in Atchison, Kansas; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Hyde Park High School in 1915, Earhart attended Ogontz, a girl's finishing school in the suburbs of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Earhart left Ogontz in the middle of her second year to work as a nurse's aide in a military hospital in Canada during World War I, attended college, and later became a social worker at Denison House, a settlement house in Boston; and

WHEREAS, Earhart took her first flying lesson on January 3, 1921, and, in six months, managed to save enough money to buy her first plane, a second-hand Kinner Airster two-seater biplane painted bright yellow, which she named "The Canary," and used to set her first women's record by rising to an altitude of 14,000 feet; and

WHEREAS, In 1928, Earhart was asked to join pilot Wilmer "Bill" Stultz and copilot and mechanic Louis E. "Slim" Gordon as part of a project to be the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, On June 17, 1928, the team left Trepassey Harbor, Newfoundland, in a Fokker F7 named Friendship, and arrived at Burry Port, Wales approximately 21 hours later; and

WHEREAS, Their landmark flight made headlines worldwide because three pilots had died within the year trying to be the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. When the crew returned to the United States, they were greeted with a ticker-tape parade in New York and a reception held by President Calvin Coolidge at the White House; and

WHEREAS, Earhart and George Putnam, a book publisher and publicist, developed a friendship during preparation for the Atlantic crossing and were married on February 7, 1931. Intent on retaining her independence, she referred to the marriage as a

"partnership" with "dual control"; and

WHEREAS, Together, Earhart and Putnam worked on secret plans for Earhart to become the first woman and the second person to fly solo across the Atlantic and on May 20, 1932, five years to the day after the Lindbergh flight across the Atlantic, she took off from Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, to Paris; and

WHEREAS, Strong north winds, icy conditions, and mechanical problems plagued the flight and forced her to land in a pasture near Londonderry, Ireland; and

WHEREAS, As word of her flight spread, the media surrounded her, both overseas and in the United States. President Herbert Hoover presented Earhart with a gold medal from the National Geographic Society and Congress awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross-the first ever given to a woman. At the ceremony, Vice President Charles Curtis praised her courage, saying she displayed "heroic courage and skill as a navigator at the risk of her life"; and

WHEREAS, Earhart felt the flight proved that men and women were equal in "jobs requiring intelligence, coordination, speed, coolness, and willpower"; and

WHEREAS, In the years that followed, Earhart continued to reach new heights, setting an altitude record for autogyros of 18,415 feet that stood for years and on January 11, 1935, she became the first person to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean from Honolulu to Oakland, California; and

WHEREAS, In 1937, as Earhart neared her 40th birthday, she was ready for a monumental, and final, challenge: she wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world; and

WHEREAS, On June 1, 1937, Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, departed from Miami and began the 29,000-mile journey around the world and by June 29, when they landed in Lae, New Guinea, all but 7,000 miles had been completed; and

WHEREAS, On July 2, 1937, the pair embarked on a 2,556 flight from Lae, New Guinea to Howland Island. During this flight they encountered difficult conditions for navigation and Earhart lost radio contact the following morning with a nearby United States Coast Guard ship. Earhart's plane disappeared and nothing further was heard from her; and

WHEREAS, The world will always remember Amelia Earhart for her courage, vision, and groundbreaking achievements, both in aviation and for women. In a letter to her husband, written in case a dangerous flight proved to be her last, her brave spirit was clear. "Please know I am quite aware of the hazards," she said. "I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others"; and be it further

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the portion of State Highway Route 101 and State Highway Route 134 between the Laurel Canyon Boulevard exit on State Highway Route 101 and the North Pass Avenue exit on State Highway Route 134 in the County of Los Angeles as the Amelia Earhart Memorial Highway; and be it further

Resolved, That the Department of Transportation is requested to determine the cost of appropriate signs, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover the cost, to erect those signs; and be it further

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