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SCR-18 Compassionate California. (2021-2022)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 18

CHAPTER 121

Relative to Compassionate California.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 10, 2021.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 18, Cortese. Compassionate California.

This measure would declare California to be the first Compassionate State in the United States of America.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The Charter for Compassion, initiated by TED Prize winner Karen Armstrong, was unveiled at the United Nations in 2009, and carries forth the vision of creating a global civil society that adheres to the "golden rule," to treat others as we would like to be treated; and

WHEREAS, The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical, and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the center of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity, and respect; and

WHEREAS, It is also necessary in both public and private life to consistently and empathetically refrain from inflicting pain, acting or speaking violently out of spite or self-interest toward any other being or group of beings, to impoverish, exploit, or deny basic rights to anyone, or to incite hatred by denigrating others, even our enemies, because these acts deny our common humanity; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing network of Compassionate Communities that have affirmed the Charter for Compassion with their local governments, including 3 countries and over 100 cities, counties, or states, spread across 50 countries globally, with more than 300 international cities and communities actively organizing to create a compassionate action plan; and

WHEREAS, Research demonstrates that practicing compassion produces positive benefits in all sectors of civic and community life, including business, education, safety, public health, and economic, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; and

WHEREAS, The State of California is lucky to have over 140,000 nonprofit entities, including 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, religious organizations, and public-private foundations, that serve the needs of Californians and humanity on topics such as human services, education, societal benefit, health, the environment, and enhancing the arts, culture, and humanities; and

WHEREAS, The state is blessed with and grateful for its 12 local governments that have already adopted the Charter for Compassion, and the 42 compassionate communities in the state organized through Compassionate California; and the state is

likewise grateful for its 28 sister states around the world; and

WHEREAS, The State of California is blessed with a talented and dedicated workforce; business, agencies, and community organization ready to pitch in; partnerships that share our values and goals; 58 counties and 482 city governments that understand that we are better when we work together; and, above all, residents who volunteer their time, tell us what they think of what we are doing, and offer their solutions; and

WHEREAS, Adoption of the Charter for Compassion is supported by thousands of state residents who organize across the state through Compassionate California, and the Legislature which recognizes the need to encourage, affirm, and promote our continuous efforts to be the most compassionate state in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The state, along with its 58 counties and 482 cities, regularly empowers and supports compassionate programs and nonprofit services to improve the lives of all California residents and treat them with dignity, with emphasis on supportive services to child and youth programs, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, veterans, immigrants, vulnerable and protected populations such as those defined by race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation and identity, nativity, native language, and related issues, workers, and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, The residents of the state regularly join in solidarity through marches, rallies, and volunteer work to uplift, protect, and demonstrate compassion for an untold number of marginalized, ignored, and disadvantaged groups because they know our culture is defined by how we treat our most vulnerable or mistreated residents; and

WHEREAS, The state hopes to serve as a model for other states in our republic — a state of compassion where anyone who wishes to live in acceptance of others can also find refuge in an environment where cultural differences are treated with respect and dignity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares California to be the first Compassionate State in the United States of America and calls upon other Americans to join us in recognizing that compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological, and religious boundaries, and also recognize that compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity; and be it further

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