



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

SCR-47 Sugihara Visas Day. (2021-2022)

SHARE THIS:  

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 47

CHAPTER 101

Relative to Sugihara Visas Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 20, 2021.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 47, Hertzberg. Sugihara Visas Day.

This measure would designate July 29, 2021, as Sugihara Visas Day to memorialize the great achievements of Sugihara Chiune in saving thousands of Jewish lives during World War II.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, During World War II, the heroic efforts of a Japanese diplomat named Sugihara Chiune enabled thousands of displaced Jews to escape persecution; and

WHEREAS, In 1939, Sugihara became a vice consul of the newly opened Japanese consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania; and

WHEREAS, Soon after Sugihara's posting at the Kaunas consulate, World War II erupted, and a large number of Jewish refugees from Poland had gathered at the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas seeking transit visas that would allow them to pass through Japan and to take refuge in other countries; and

WHEREAS, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had instructed Sugihara to issue transit visas to applicants who had completed immigration procedures to their final destinations and possessed sufficient funds to pay for their travel and stay in Japan, but Sugihara, acting as a humanitarian, also issued transit visas to those who did not meet these requirements; and

WHEREAS, On July 29, 1940, Sugihara began issuing the transit visas, which have become known as "visas for life;" and

WHEREAS, The visa list from the Kaunas consulate that exists today contains nearly 2,140 names, but because family members were also allowed entry with a single visa granted to the head of a household, and because some visas were issued without being noted on the list, the number of lives saved is thought to be much higher; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, the Israeli Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, honored Sugihara with the title of "Righteous Among the Nations," a title bestowed upon non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews from the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan established a commemorative plaque in honor of Sugihara's humanitarian acts, which is on display at the Ministry's Diplomatic Archives along with other documents related to the "visas for life"; and

WHEREAS, In the Little Tokyo district of Los Angeles, the historic heart of the region's Japanese American community, a bronze statue of Sugihara was installed in 2002, bringing greater awareness to Sugihara's story; and

WHEREAS, The year 2020 marks 80 years since Sugihara began issuing the "visas for life"; and

WHEREAS, California has the largest number of residents of Japanese heritage of all states in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of Sugihara Chiune has helped to foster friendship between Japan and the Jewish American and Japanese American communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes July 29, 2021, as "Sugihara Visas Day" to memorialize the great achievements of Sugihara Chiune in saving thousands of Jewish lives and as a testament to what one person can do to change the course of the lives of others; and be it further

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