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ACR-17 California Native American Day and the California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 17

CHAPTER 164

Relative to California Native American Day and the California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 14, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 17, Ramos. California Native American Day and the California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference.

This measure would recognize the importance of California Native American Day, celebrated this year on September 22, 2023, and the annual California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference, to the enhancement of awareness of California Indian culture.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, More Native Americans call California home and the state includes more federally recognized Indian tribes than any other state in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The cultural and governmental contributions of the Native people of California have shaped the course of the state throughout history; and

WHEREAS, California designates the fourth Friday of every September as Native American Day; and

WHEREAS, California Native American Day is celebrated in this state by tribes and communities across the state, and is a day for educators of California to teach factual California Indian history in schools; and

WHEREAS, California Indian tribes are committed to contributing to the educational curricula provided by the state and believe in providing new and improved educational resources about the varied cultural histories of, and governance models used by, California Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, One notable example of the preservation and teaching of that varied cultural history is Robert Levi, a Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian from the Torres Martinez Indian Reservation, who was instrumental in retaining and teaching Desert Cahuilla bird songs to connect all with ancient knowledge of the world and tell the story of how the ancestors came to the homelands; and

WHEREAS, Significant legislation has been passed in both houses and signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom since 2018, such as Assembly Bill 1703 (2021), commonly referred to as the California Indian Education Act, encouraging local education agencies to collaborate with tribes local to their area on Native American studies; Assembly Bill 2022 (2021), an act prohibiting the use of a racist and misogynistic slur for geographic features and place names in the State of California; Assembly Bill 338 (2021), an act replacing a monument on the State Capitol grounds with a monument created with the input of local tribal nations;

and Assembly Bill 1314 (2022), an act establishing the Feather Alert, a notification system for missing or murdered indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, This is the fifth California Native American Day since Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order apologizing for the historical wrongs tolerated, encouraged, subsidized, and committed by state actors against California Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, We can never undo the wrongs inflicted on the people who have lived on this land that we now call California, but we can work together to build bridges, tell the truth about California's past, and begin to heal deep wounds; and

WHEREAS, The Governor has also called for a Truth and Healing Council to hear testimony and clarify the historical record on the relationship between the state and California Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, The California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference will be held concurrently with California Native American Day and will assist educators by providing new educational resources regarding the rich and varied lives of the California Indian Nations; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the importance of California Native American Day, celebrated this year on September 22, 2023, and the annual California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference, to the enhancement of awareness of California Indian culture; and be it further

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