



ACR-149 Irish American Heritage Month: 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ireland. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 149

CHAPTER 41

Relative to Irish American Heritage Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 16, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 149, Gallagher. Irish American Heritage Month: 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ireland.

This measure would, among other things, designate March 2024 as Irish American Heritage Month in honor of the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ireland and would commemorate the multitude of contributions that Irish Americans have made to this country and state.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The democratic expression of the people of Ireland's will in 1918 led directly to the establishment of an independent state and enabled the people of Ireland to enjoy the freedom they have today; and

WHEREAS, The First Dáil gave a voice to the people of Ireland's expression of self-determination in the 1918 general election; and

WHEREAS, On January 21, 1919, the first meeting of the unicameral parliament of the revolutionary Irish Republic, known as the First Dáil Éireann, met in the City of Dublin's Mansion House to declare Ireland to be an independent nation and to establish its alternative parliament; and

WHEREAS, The First Dáil produced a Declaration of Independence and a Message to the Free Nations of the World; and

WHEREAS, The United States recognized and established diplomatic relations with the Irish Free State in 1924; and

WHEREAS, The year of 2024 marks 100 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ireland, a milestone that will be celebrated in both countries; and

WHEREAS, On April 10, 1998, the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom signed the Good Friday Agreement, also known as the "Belfast Agreement," with the goals of bringing a new era of devolved government and democracy to Northern Ireland, ending violence, and ensuring peace for the people on the island of Ireland; and

WHEREAS, The successful negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement stands as a historic and groundbreaking success that has proven critical to the decades of relative peace that have followed; and

WHEREAS, The restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, coupled with the economic opportunities that Northern Ireland's unique access to both the United Kingdom internal market and the European Union single market provides, paved the way for a thriving Irish economy; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Irish people, faced with severe hardship due to famine and poverty in their nation, immigrated to the United States over the last several centuries in search of a more promising future for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, The journey to America from the Emerald Isle was not paved with gold. The Irish spirit of determination, perseverance, and grit prevailed against dangerous seas and deadly conditions with their hearts set on the horizon; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans initially suffered prejudice and discrimination upon first arriving in the United States. As the years went on, Irish Americans became deeply integrated in their communities and made numerous contributions in all aspects of American society and culture; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans played vital roles in the development of the United States. Nine Irish Americans were signers of the Declaration of Independence, and 23 Presidents of the United States have been of Irish heritage, including John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George H. W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Joe Biden; and

WHEREAS, Many people of Irish descent have contributed to great movements that have helped to shape our country and its role in the world, including Mother Jones, labor activist; Kate Kennedy, known for the "equal pay for equal work" campaign; Lucy Burns, activist in the women's suffrage movement; and Senator George J. Mitchell, negotiator of the Belfast Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have also played a major role in California politics as governors, legislative leaders, city mayors, and other public officials, who have worked tirelessly to build California into the state that it is today; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans were significantly involved in the development of infrastructure throughout the United States, especially in the State of California. This included work on railroads and bridges that connected the west to the east. The Irish were also instrumental in the building of dams, roads, canals, and buildings that expanded greatly in the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have made their mark as peace officers and firefighters and have risked or lost their lives on countless occasions in carrying out their duties; and

WHEREAS, Many outstanding soldiers, never to be forgotten, who fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War were of Irish descent. Irish Americans have proudly served with distinction in every war that this nation has fought and continue to do so today; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have contributed greatly to the United States economy in business, including: Alexander Turney Stewart, the inventor of the American department store; Cathleen Black, former president of Hearst Publishing; Jack Welch, former president and chief executive officer of General Electric; Herb Kelleher, cofounder of Southwest Airlines; John Donahoe, chief executive officer of Nike, Inc.; Conrad Burke, founder of Innovalight, Inc.; Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company; Richard and Maurice McDonald, founders of McDonald's fast food; and Maggie Sullivan Wilderotter, chair of DocuSign; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the field of science, including: astronaut Michael Collins; the first female commander of a space shuttle, Eileen Collins; physicist and Nobel Laureate Charles H. Townes; and bioengineer and MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient James Collins; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the American literary tradition through great authors, including Flannery O'Connor, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mary McCarthy, Tom Clancy, and Frank McCourt; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to American entertainment with such stars as actors Jack Nicholson, John Wayne, and George Clooney; actor and comedian Bill Murray; actress Grace Kelly; actress and comedian Rosie O'Donnell; actor and singer Bing Crosby; actress and singer Rosemary Clooney; actress and singer Judy Garland; comedian Conan O'Brien; and actor and director Edward Burns, all being of Irish heritage; and

WHEREAS, There is significant economic reciprocity between California and Ireland, including Ireland as the seventh largest source of foreign direct investment through wholly foreign-owned enterprises in California, and there is work underway to further build these relationships; and

WHEREAS, There exists a longstanding and richly multifaceted relationship between California and Ireland. The first Consulate General of Ireland opened in the City of San Francisco in 1933 and the second Consulate General of Ireland opened in the City of Los Angeles in 2019, which reinforces the strong and vibrant connections between California and Ireland built on shared heritage, values, and ambition; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 35,000,000 Americans claim Irish heritage, and they continue to contribute to the politics, economy, and culture of the United States and California; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature, in honor of 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Ireland and the multitude of contributions that Irish Americans have made to make this a better country and state for all people, designates March 2024 to be Irish American Heritage Month in California, and calls upon the people of the state to observe the month of March with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities, especially on March 17, because everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to Ireland's Ambassador to the United States, Geraldine Byrne Nason; Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann, Seán Ó Feargháil; Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Jerry Buttimer; Ireland's Consul General to the Western United States, Micheál Smith; and to the author for further appropriate distribution.