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**SCR-91 Court Adoption and Permanency Month.** (2023-2024)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 91**

**CHAPTER 22**

Relative to Court Adoption and Permanency Month.

[ Approved by Governor March 07, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State March 07, 2024. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 91, Ashby. Court Adoption and Permanency Month.

This measure would declare November 2023 as Court Adoption and Permanency Month.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Consistent with its commitment to support practices and procedures that promote access to justice and improved case outcomes for California's children and families, the Judicial Council has annually recognized November as Court Adoption and Permanency Month since 1999; and

WHEREAS, The Judicial Council, courts, and justice partners have created programs that prioritize relative placement for children in foster care, and all recognize the ongoing need to help improve the lives of children and families; and

WHEREAS, Of the over 53,000 children and youth 21 years of age and younger in child welfare-supervised out-of-home care in 2022, more than one-third were placed with relatives, whereas of the nearly 1,500 probation-supervised children and youth in out-of-home care, only 5 percent were placed with relatives; and

WHEREAS, Federal and state laws require courts to ensure that social services exercise due diligence in locating and engaging relatives and extended family members as the preferential placement for children removed from the family home; and

WHEREAS, The state authorizes relatives to take in foster children on an emergency basis and receive temporary grant funding and background checks, provided the court finds the relatives' care safe for the child; and

WHEREAS, Over 70 percent of children in relative placements are with all their siblings, compared to roughly 50 percent for those in nonrelative placements; and

WHEREAS, Youth with relative placements at the time they exit care are less likely to reenter after a year; and

WHEREAS, Roughly 70 percent of children still in care at 12 months remain in their first placement if initially placed with relatives, compared to less than 25 percent who were initially placed with nonrelatives; and

WHEREAS, Although courts and justice partners have created programs that promote family placement and permanency, work is still needed to address disparities; and

WHEREAS, Black, Native American, and Latino or Hispanic children continue to be overrepresented among children in care, with Black children more than five times and Native American children more than four times as likely to be in foster care as White children; and

WHEREAS, The judge of the juvenile court, in the judge's unique leadership role, provides active leadership within the community in determining the needs of children and of obtaining and developing resources to reduce the trauma of removal of children from their parents and relatives; and

WHEREAS, The Judicial Council and the courts have made a comprehensive effort to improve juvenile court proceedings, including accessing federal and state grants for judicial officer training, guides for dependency proceedings, convenings for courts and stakeholders, and developing rules of court and court forms, and administering new funding sources for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel; and

WHEREAS, The Judicial Council remains committed to working with the Governor, the Legislature, and local courts and communities to provide children and families with access to fair, understandable judicial proceedings leading to timely, well-informed, and just permanency outcomes; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares November 2023 as Court Adoption and Permanency Month, and encourages the courts and their communities to join in activities to promote permanency; and be it further

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