House Resolution No. 36


August 24, 2006

House Resolution No. 36—Relative to Pluto’s planetary status.

WHEREAS, Recent astronomical discoveries, including Pluto’s oblong orbit and the sighting of a slightly larger Kuiper Belt object, have led astronomers to question the planetary status of Pluto; and

WHEREAS, The mean-spirited International Astronomical Union decided on August 24, 2006, to disrespect Pluto by stripping Pluto of its planetary status and reclassifying it as a lowly dwarf planet; and

WHEREAS, Pluto was discovered in 1930 by an American, Clyde Tombaugh, at the Lowell Observatory in Arizona, and this discovery resulted in millions of Californians being taught that Pluto was the ninth planet in the solar system; and

WHEREAS, Pluto, named after the Roman God of the underworld and affectionately sharing the name of California’s
most famous animated dog, has a special connection to
California history and culture; and
WHEREAS, Downgrading Pluto’s status will cause
psychological harm to some Californians who question their
place in the universe and worry about the instability of universal
constants; and
WHEREAS, The deletion of Pluto as a planet renders millions
of text books, museum displays, and children’s refrigerator art
projects obsolete, and represents a substantial unfunded mandate
that must be paid by dwindling Proposition 98 education funds,
thereby harming California’s children and widening its budget
deficits; and
WHEREAS, The deletion of Pluto as a planet is a hasty,
ill-considered scientific heresy similar to questioning the
Copernican theory, drawing maps of a round world, and proving
the existence of the time and space continuum; and
WHEREAS, The downgrading of Pluto reduces the number of
planets available for legislative leaders to hide redistricting
legislation and other inconvenient political reform measures; and
WHEREAS, The California Legislature, in the closing days of
the 2005–06 session, has been considering few matters important
to the future of California, and the status of Pluto takes
precedence and is worthy of this body’s immediate attention;
now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the
Assembly hereby condemns the International Astronomical
Union’s decision to strip Pluto of its planetary status for its
tremendous impact on the people of California and the state’s
long term fiscal health; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly Clerk shall send a copy of the
resolution to the International Astronomical Union and to any
California who, believing that his or her legislator is addressing
the problems that threaten the future of the Golden State, requests
a copy of the resolution.