

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 51

**Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Fletcher)**

March 16, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 51—Relative to Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 51, as introduced, Bonnie Lowenthal. Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week.

This measure would recognize April 13 to April 17, 2009 as Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week, and would call upon all Californians to observe the week by participating in appropriate activities and programs.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Cambodian people have a long and rich
2 cultural heritage symbolized by the temple city Angkor Wat,
3 considered one of the Wonders of the Ancient World, built between
4 the 9th and 12th centuries, stands as a living icon of the endurance
5 and genius of all Cambodians throughout the world; and
6 WHEREAS, Early connections between the United States and
7 Cambodia began in the 1950s when Cambodia sent bright and
8 talented college students to universities, including California State
9 Universities in Long Beach and Los Angeles, to study technical
10 trades, engineering, and agriculture with the assistance of the
11 United States Agency for International Development (USAID);
12 and

1 WHEREAS, The relationship between the United States and
2 Cambodia had been forged through educational and professional
3 exchange and therefore in 1975 with the impending overthrow of
4 the government by the totalitarian Khmer Rouge regime, the United
5 States accepted over 4,000 Cambodian evacuees to ensure their
6 safety; and

7 WHEREAS, Between April 17, 1975, and January 7, 1979, the
8 Khmer Rouge of Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, Secretary
9 General of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, and other members
10 of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the
11 Communist Party of Kampuchea and their agents, committed acts
12 of genocide and other crimes against humanity; and

13 WHEREAS, The genocide and other crimes against humanity
14 committed against the people of Cambodia, including various
15 religious groups and ethnic minorities, during the Khmer Rouge
16 regime led to the deaths of over 1,700,000 Cambodians, which
17 was 21 percent of the nation's population; and

18 WHEREAS, The Khmer Rouge regime also sought to eliminate
19 all aspects of Cambodian culture by systematically killing those
20 with education, separating families, and destroying institutions
21 such as Buddhist temples, schools, libraries, dance, and music;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, After the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime
24 in 1979, over 140,000 Cambodians came to the United States as
25 refugees, a group of special humanitarian and foreign policy
26 concern to the United States because of the well-founded fear of
27 persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership
28 in a particular social group, or political opinion and thus in need
29 of protection in accordance with the United Nations' 1951
30 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; and

31 WHEREAS, The State of California has the largest population
32 of Cambodians and the City of Long Beach is known around the
33 world as home to the largest Cambodian community outside of
34 Southeast Asia; and

35 WHEREAS, The Cambodian people have drawn from their
36 cultural history to rebuild their lives and communities through
37 participation in American politics on the local and national levels,
38 by establishing local and international businesses, by developing
39 new art forms and community organizations, and by raising a new

1 generation of Americans who promise to contribute to the future
2 of the State of California and the nation; and

3 WHEREAS, On July 3, 2007, the Long Beach City Council
4 formally recognized a section of the Anaheim Corridor “Cambodia
5 Town,” which is the first ethnic designation in Long Beach city
6 history and the first “Cambodia Town” in the United States, and
7 serves as evidence of the contributions Cambodians have made to
8 the social, cultural, and economic development of Long Beach;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, The Cambodian genocide was one of the greatest
11 human tragedies of the 20th century and must be remembered for
12 the scale of the violence and devastation perpetrated against the
13 people of Cambodia, so that it does not happen again there or in
14 any other country; and

15 WHEREAS, The genocide and other crimes against humanity
16 did not succeed in destroying the Cambodian people nor their
17 culture; in fact the culture and heritage of the Cambodian people
18 continues to this day through the accomplishments of Cambodians
19 and their descendants; and

20 WHEREAS, The suffering and loss of the Cambodian people
21 and their accomplishments and perseverance in reestablishing
22 families, communities, and enhancing the cultural and historical
23 diversity of our state and nation should be recognized and honored;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, The Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week will
26 honor the survivors and their descendants for their courage and
27 contributions to our state and country. This week will serve as a
28 way to remember those who lost their lives in Cambodia and in
29 genocides around the world; now, therefore, be it

30 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
31 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the week of
32 April 13, to April 17, 2009, inclusive, as Cambodian Genocide
33 Memorial Week, and calls upon all Californians to observe the
34 week by participating in appropriate activities and programs; and
35 be it further

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

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