

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 40

Introduced by Assembly Member Solorio
(Principal coauthor: Senator Correa)

March 21, 2011

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 40—Relative to Vietnamese American history.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 40, as introduced, Solorio. Vietnamese American history.

This measure would recognize April 24, 2011, to April 30, 2011, inclusive, as Black April Memorial Week, and April 2011 as Vietnamese American month.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, April 30, 2011, marks the 36th anniversary of the
2 end of the Vietnam War and the start of the eventual exodus of
3 several million Vietnamese out of Vietnam after South Vietnam's
4 capital of Saigon fell to the communists on April 30, 1975; and
5 WHEREAS, For many Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who
6 were directly involved in the war and Vietnamese Americans who
7 have settled in the United States, the Vietnam War was a tragedy
8 full of great suffering and the loss of American, Vietnamese, and
9 Southeast Asian lives; and
10 WHEREAS, 58,169 people were killed and 304,000 were
11 wounded out of the 2.59 million people who served in the Vietnam
12 War so that one out of every ten Americans who served in Vietnam
13 became a casualty of war; and

1 WHEREAS, During the American evacuation of Saigon, the
2 first wave of Vietnamese refugees, 135,000 strong, mostly military
3 officers and their families, took temporary shelter through several
4 international refugee camps, and at Camp Pendleton in San Diego,
5 Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, and Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Starting in 1977, and lasting through the
8 mid-1980s, a second wave of Vietnamese refugees comprised
9 mostly of “boat people” began leaving Vietnam; and

10 WHEREAS, Seeing no future under communism, nearly 800,000
11 boat people risked their lives in small, dangerous boats to travel
12 to resettlement camps in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia,
13 Thailand, and the Philippines before eventually being resettled in
14 the United States; and

15 WHEREAS, The Red Cross estimated that during that time, at
16 least 300,000 Vietnamese died on the high seas while trying to
17 escape communism; and

18 WHEREAS, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees
19 came to the United States under the Orderly Department Program;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, In 1988, Congress passed the Operation
22 Homecoming Act, a program allowing approximately 80,000
23 Amerasian children (offspring of GI fathers and Vietnamese
24 mothers) to come to America; and

25 WHEREAS, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees
26 began arriving in the United States under the Humanitarian
27 Operation, and today, more than 1.7 million Vietnamese
28 immigrants reside in the United States; and

29 WHEREAS, Studies using census data show that foreign-born
30 Vietnamese entering the United States in the 1980s, 1990s, and
31 2000 to 2005, inclusive, have seen an increase in terms of English
32 proficiency, proportion of college graduates, the number of
33 owner-occupied housing, family median income, and
34 naturalization; and

35 WHEREAS, Over the years, Vietnamese immigrants have
36 overcome social, economic, and language barriers of unforeseen
37 magnitude to grow and become the most assimilated along civic
38 dimensions of any large group in America; and

39 WHEREAS, Through emphasis on intense study, Vietnamese
40 Americans have reached the pinnacles of American success in a

1 variety of fields, including business and entrepreneurship, science
2 and technology, space travel, medicine, the executive branch of
3 the United States government, politics, the United States military,
4 the United States judicial system, professional sports, and most
5 recently, cultural icon status in cooking, modeling, acting, and
6 comedy; and

7 WHEREAS, In order to serve their community and prosper in
8 America, Vietnamese Americans formed well-established and
9 thriving Vietnamese American commercial districts throughout
10 the United States and California, including enclaves in Oakland,
11 Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San
12 Jose; and

13 WHEREAS, More than 450,000 Vietnamese now live in
14 California, with the largest concentration of Vietnamese found
15 outside of Vietnam residing in Orange County, particularly in the
16 cities of Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Westminster, and Fountain
17 Valley; and

18 WHEREAS, San Jose, with a population of 900,000, has the
19 largest concentration of Vietnamese of any American city,
20 estimated at 10 percent of the city's population; and

21 WHEREAS, In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau survey of business
22 owners reported that there are 50,321 Vietnamese businesses in
23 California; and

24 WHEREAS, As we must teach our children and future
25 generations important lessons from the Vietnam War, including
26 how the plight of the Vietnamese refugees following the end of
27 war serves as a powerful example of the values of freedom and
28 democracy; and

29 WHEREAS, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic
30 of Vietnam who came to the United States and settled as free
31 Vietnamese Americans are honored and remembered for their
32 sacrifices for freedom and human rights and for their ongoing
33 contributions to our democratic society; and

34 WHEREAS, An executive order issued by Governor Arnold
35 Schwarzenegger honors the contributions of the Vietnamese
36 American community to the State of California and recognizes
37 their love for democracy, justice, and tolerance, upon which the
38 symbol of the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag was
39 established; and

1 WHEREAS, The Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag,
2 yellow, with three horizontal red stripes, is the only symbol that
3 can unite most Vietnamese around the world and bring them
4 together under the banner that symbolizes the aspiration for
5 freedom and democracy in their homeland; and

6 WHEREAS, Although also united in sorrow as they
7 commemorate April 30, 2011, as Black April, an occasion to reflect
8 on the sacrifices of the past, Vietnamese American communities
9 throughout California consider Black April a celebration of the
10 resilience of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

11 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
12 *thereof concurring*, That in recognition of the great tragedy and
13 suffering and lives lost during the Vietnam War era, the week of
14 April 24, 2011, to April 30, 2011, inclusive, shall be proclaimed
15 Black April Memorial Week, a special time for Californians to
16 remember the countless lives lost during the Vietnam War era,
17 and to hope for a more humane and just life for the people of
18 Vietnam; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That, to honor a community that has added so much
20 personal, cultural, and economic value to the social fabric of the
21 great State of California, which embraces ethnic and cultural
22 diversity, the month of April 2011 be recognized as Vietnamese
23 American Month.