

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 138

Introduced by Assembly Member Solorio
(Coauthors: Senators Correa and Lowenthal)

March 22, 2012

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 138—Relative to Vietnamese American history.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 138, as introduced, Solorio. Vietnamese American history.

This measure would recognize April 23, 2012, to April 30, 2012, inclusive, as Black April Memorial Week, and April 2012 as Vietnamese American month.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, April 30, 2012, marks the 37th 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, From 1961 to 1975, inclusive, approximately
11 550,000 members of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and
12 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were killed
13 and 304,000 United States Armed Forces and more than 750,000

1 members of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces were wounded;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Out of the 2.59 million people who served in the
4 Vietnam War, one out of every 10 Americans who served in
5 Vietnam became a casualty of war; and

6 WHEREAS, After the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, more
7 than 250,000 members of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
8 were sent to reeducation camps where more than 20,000 died and
9 many spent up to 17 years in captivity before they were released;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, During the American evacuation of Saigon, the
12 first wave of Vietnamese refugees, 135,000 strong, mostly military
13 officers and their families, took temporary shelter through several
14 international refugee camps, and at Camp Pendleton in San Diego,
15 Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, and Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania;
16 and

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

20 WHEREAS, Seeing no future under communism, nearly 800,000
21 boat people risked their lives in small, dangerous boats to travel
22 to resettlement camps in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia,
23 Thailand, and the Philippines before eventually being resettled in
24 the United States; and

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

28 WHEREAS, After 1985, a third wave of Vietnamese refugees
29 came to the United States under the Orderly Department Program;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, In 1988, Congress passed the Operation
32 Homecoming Act, a program allowing approximately 80,000
33 Amerasian children (offspring of GI fathers and Vietnamese
34 mothers) to come to America; and

35 WHEREAS, By 1990, the fourth wave of Vietnamese refugees
36 began arriving in the United States under the Humanitarian
37 Operation, and today, more than 1.5 million Vietnamese Americans
38 identified their race as Vietnamese alone in the 2010 United States
39 Census; and

1 WHEREAS, Studies using census data show that foreign-born
2 Vietnamese entering the United States in the 1980s, 1990s, and
3 2000 to 2010, inclusive, have seen an increase in terms of English
4 proficiency, proportion of college graduates, the number of
5 owner-occupied housing, family median income, and
6 naturalization; and

7 WHEREAS, Over the years, Vietnamese immigrants have
8 overcome social, economic, and language barriers of unforeseen
9 magnitude to grow and become the most assimilated along civic
10 dimensions of any large group in America; and

11 WHEREAS, Through emphasis on intense study, Vietnamese
12 Americans have reached the pinnacles of American success in a
13 variety of fields, including business and entrepreneurship, science
14 and technology, space travel, medicine, the executive branch of
15 the United States government, politics, the United States military,
16 the United States judicial system, professional sports, and most
17 recently, cultural icon status in cooking, modeling, acting, and
18 comedy; and

19 WHEREAS, In order to serve their community and prosper in
20 America, Vietnamese Americans formed well-established and
21 thriving Vietnamese American commercial districts throughout
22 the United States and California, including enclaves in Oakland,
23 Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San
24 Jose; and

25 WHEREAS, More than 581,986 Vietnamese now live in
26 California, with the largest concentration of Vietnamese found
27 outside of Vietnam residing in Orange County, particularly in the
28 cities of Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Westminster, and Fountain
29 Valley; and

30 WHEREAS, San Jose has the largest concentration of
31 Vietnamese of any American city, with more than 100,000 people
32 or 10 percent of the city's population; and

33 WHEREAS, In 2007, the United States Census Bureau survey
34 of business owners reported that there are 68,812 Vietnamese
35 businesses in California with receipts of \$13.4 billion; and

36 WHEREAS, As we must teach our children and future
37 generations important lessons from the Vietnam War, including
38 how the plight of the Vietnamese refugees following the end of
39 war serves as a powerful example of the values of freedom and
40 democracy; and

1 WHEREAS, Refugees and immigrants from the former Republic
2 of Vietnam who came to the United States and settled as free
3 Vietnamese Americans are honored and remembered for their
4 sacrifices for freedom and human rights and for their ongoing
5 contributions to our democratic society; and

6 WHEREAS, Executive Order S-14-06 issued by Governor
7 Arnold Schwarzenegger and continued by Governor Edmund G.
8 Brown Jr. who also issued an official statement acknowledging
9 his support of the Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage Flag. The
10 Executive Order honors the contributions of the Vietnamese
11 American community to the State of California and recognizes
12 their love for democracy, justice, and tolerance, upon which the
13 symbol of the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag was
14 established; and

15 WHEREAS, The Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag,
16 yellow, with three horizontal red stripes, is the only symbol that
17 can unite most Vietnamese around the world and bring them
18 together under the banner that symbolizes the aspiration for
19 freedom and democracy in their homeland; and

20 WHEREAS, The Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag, dating
21 back to 1948, has been and will continue to be a symbol of
22 resilience, freedom, and democracy to many Vietnamese Americans
23 in California, and is also an important symbol in the history of
24 Vietnamese Americans; and

25 WHEREAS, Although also united in sorrow as they
26 commemorate April 30, 2012, as Black April, an occasion to reflect
27 on the sacrifices of the past, Vietnamese American communities
28 throughout California consider Black April a celebration of the
29 resilience of the Vietnamese people; now, therefore, be it

30 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
31 *thereof concurring*, That in recognition of the great tragedy and
32 suffering and lives lost during the Vietnam War era, the week of
33 April 23, 2012, to April 30, 2012, inclusive, shall be proclaimed
34 Black April Memorial Week, a special time for Californians to
35 remember the countless lives lost during the Vietnam War era,
36 and to hope for a more humane and just life for the people of
37 Vietnam; and be it further

38 *Resolved*, That the month of April 2012 be recognized as
39 Vietnamese American Month to honor a community that has added
40 so much personal, cultural, and economic value to the social fabric

1 of the great State of California, which embraces ethnic and cultural
2 diversity; and be it further
3 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
4 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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