

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 6, 2012

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 161**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Dickinson**

June 13, 2012

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 161—Relative to food literacy awareness month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 161, as amended, Dickinson. Food literacy awareness month.

This measure would proclaim the month of September of each year as food literacy awareness month and would encourage the ~~State Department of Health Care Services~~ *Food and Agriculture*, the State Department of Public Health, and the State Department of Education to work together with local communities to engage in various activities related to food choices and education.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1     WHEREAS, “Food literacy” is defined as the understanding of  
2     the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment,  
3     and our community; and  
4     WHEREAS, Our food choices affect our health. In California,  
5     38 percent of children are overweight. If the problem of obesity  
6     is not reversed, poor diet and physical inactivity will likely overtake  
7     tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in America; and  
8     WHEREAS, Only 14 percent of Americans eat five servings of  
9     fruits and vegetables daily; and  
10    WHEREAS, Residents living in low-income and underserved  
11    neighborhoods without access to fresh, healthy foods, known as

1 “food deserts,” have more health problems and higher mortality  
2 *rates* than residents of areas with a higher proportion of grocery  
3 stores. Outcomes worsen when the food desert has high  
4 concentrations of nearby fast food alternatives; and

5 WHEREAS, Food grown and consumed locally has a higher  
6 nutrient value than foods transported long distances; and

7 WHEREAS, People who shop at farmers’ markets come home  
8 with more fruits and vegetables than people who shop at the  
9 supermarket. Expansion of local food systems could ultimately  
10 help reduce health care costs from obesity and other health  
11 problems linked to a diet dominated by processed foods; and

12 WHEREAS, Our food choices affect the environment: food sold  
13 through direct marketing channels tends to be relatively less  
14 processed, which can result in significant energy savings.  
15 Expansion of local and regional food systems can reduce the  
16 environmental cost of United States agriculture; and

17 WHEREAS, The entire global food chain may account for  
18 one-third of what’s heating our planet; and

19 WHEREAS, Pesticide use in our food system has been proven  
20 both harmful to the environment and to human health. Organic  
21 produce contains higher levels of vitamins and nutrients than those  
22 sprayed with pesticides; and

23 WHEREAS, If we all ate just one local meal a week we would  
24 save 1.1 million barrels of oil annually; and

25 WHEREAS, Our food choices affect our community: as they  
26 grow, local and regional food systems create jobs and raise incomes  
27 in the areas they serve, keeping customers’ food dollars active in  
28 the local economy as farmers increase spending on inputs and  
29 equipment to meet growing local demand; and

30 WHEREAS, Education is needed to inspire change. Forty-two  
31 percent of parents find it easier to understand furniture assembly  
32 instructions than the contents of a nutrition label; and

33 WHEREAS, When individuals are taught how to cook with  
34 fresh fruits and vegetables, they are 85 percent more likely to  
35 incorporate them into their diet. People who don’t cook spend a  
36 larger percentage of their budget on food than those who do; and

37 WHEREAS, The objective of food literacy awareness month  
38 will be to promote food education, inspire food choices that are  
39 good for people and good for the planet, encourage parental

1 involvement, and motivate communitywide support; now, therefore  
2 be it

3 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
4 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the  
5 month of September of each year as food literacy awareness month  
6 in California; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the Legislature encourages the ~~State Department~~  
8 ~~of Health Care Services~~ *Department of Food and Agriculture*, the  
9 State Department of Public Health, and the State Department of  
10 Education to work together with local communities to do all of  
11 the following:

12 (a) Increase awareness about the broad impacts our food choices  
13 have on our health, environment, and communities.

14 (b) Educate our children about eating food that's healthy for  
15 them and for the planet.

16 (c) Encourage consumption of more unprocessed foods through  
17 local, California-grown whole foods and improve access to local  
18 farmers' markets, farm stands, and gardens.

19 (d) Teach families how to cook healthy, budget-friendly meals  
20 and snacks.

21 (e) Support change in our public food choices that promote  
22 health as much as convenience.

23 (f) Improve the environmental effects of our food system by  
24 encouraging composting, organics, waste reduction, and  
25 sustainability; and be it further

26 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
27 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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