

**Introduced by Senator Evans**  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal)

February 22, 2011

---

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 16—Relative to Women’s History Month and women’s suffrage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 16, as introduced, Evans. Women’s history.

This measure would celebrate Women’s History Month and the achievement of women’s suffrage in California 100 years ago.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In 1896, women in California had lost their first  
2 contest for the right to vote; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1910, a progressive Republican administration  
4 was swept into power and woman suffragists seized the opportunity  
5 and successfully lobbied the Legislature to put the issue on the  
6 ballot; and

7 WHEREAS, Senate Constitutional Amendment 8, authored by  
8 Senator Bell, was introduced to put the question to voters of  
9 whether women should be allowed to vote; and

10 WHEREAS, Supporters only had eight months to organize their  
11 campaign to win voter approval; and

12 WHEREAS, Suffragists spoke to voters in the streets and from  
13 automobiles, held mass rallies, picnics, and small meetings,  
14 addressed congregations, unions, factory workers, women’s clubs,  
15 and spoke to any audience that they could find; and

16 WHEREAS, A popular opening line when addressing a crowd  
17 was: “I appeal to you as a mother, a grandmother, as a garment

1 worker, a school teacher, a trained nurse,” or as the case might  
2 have been; and

3 WHEREAS, To publicize their cause as widely as possible, the  
4 suffragists produced pin-back buttons, pennants, playing cards,  
5 posters, shopping bags, billboards, and electric signs; and

6 WHEREAS, Over three million pieces of literature and over  
7 90,000 “Votes for Women” buttons were distributed in southern  
8 California alone; and

9 WHEREAS, Suffragist leaders, who anticipated strong  
10 oppositions by saloon and business interests in the cities who feared  
11 prohibition, concentrated their forces on the rural districts,  
12 organizing automobile tours and press to reach distant voters in  
13 the remote corners of our great state; and

14 WHEREAS, Ten thousand people gathered for a final rally in  
15 San Francisco with fireworks and a band concert; and

16 WHEREAS, On election day, October 10, 1911, when the  
17 measure was defeated soundly in the San Francisco Bay area and  
18 passed just barely in Los Angeles; suffragist organizers believed  
19 they had been defeated; and

20 WHEREAS, When the long count was finally completed several  
21 days later, Equal Suffrage passed by only 3,587 votes, an average  
22 majority of one vote in each precinct in the state, making the final  
23 tally 125,037 to 121,450, rural districts contributing immensely  
24 to the victory; and

25 WHEREAS, With the passage of votes for women in California,  
26 the number of women with full suffrage in the United States  
27 doubled, and San Francisco became the most populous city in the  
28 world in which women could vote; now, therefore, be it

29 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
30 *thereof concurring,* That, as we celebrate Women’s History Month  
31 in March, we commemorate the centennial of women’s suffrage  
32 in California.