

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 2012

**Senate Joint Resolution**

**No. 22**

---

---

**Introduced by Senator Simitian**

March 22, 2012

---

---

Senate Joint Resolution No. 22—Relative to World Press Freedom Day 2012.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 22, as amended, Simitian. World Press Freedom Day 2012.

This measure would recognize May 3, 2012, as World Press Freedom Day 2012, and encourage all state legislatures throughout the United States to recognize May 3, 2012, as World Press Freedom Day 2012, thereby also acknowledging the importance of a free press in the United States and the world.

Fiscal committee: no.

1     WHEREAS, ~~Section~~ *Article* 19 of the Universal Declaration of  
2     Human Rights, passed by the United Nations General Assembly  
3     in 1948, proclaims that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of  
4     opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold  
5     opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart  
6     information and ideas through any media and regardless of  
7     frontiers”; and  
8     WHEREAS, In 1993, the United Nations declared May 3rd of  
9     each year as World Press Freedom Day; and  
10    WHEREAS, May 3rd is now the annual date that celebrates the  
11    fundamental principles of press freedom, evaluates press freedom  
12    around the world, defends the media from attacks on its

1 independence, and pays tribute to journalists who have lost their  
2 lives in the exercise of their profession; and

3 ~~WHEREAS, According to the Committee to Protect Journalists,~~  
4 ~~an independent, nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to promote~~  
5 ~~press freedom worldwide, thus far, 13 journalists have been killed~~  
6 ~~in 2012, a total of 907 journalists have been killed since 1992, and~~  
7 ~~approximately 179 journalists are currently imprisoned worldwide;~~  
8 ~~and~~

9 *WHEREAS, Press freedom was enshrined as a fundamental*  
10 *right in the United States in 1791 with the effectiveness of the Bill*  
11 *of Rights, containing the First Amendment to the United States*  
12 *Constitution, declaring “Congress shall make no law...abridging*  
13 *the freedom...of the press” and this fundamental right has been*  
14 *instrumental in the advancement of democratic values in the United*  
15 *States and around the world; and*

16 *WHEREAS, According to the International Press Institute (IPI),*  
17 *an independent, nonprofit organization founded in the United*  
18 *States in 1950 to promote press freedom worldwide and which*  
19 *holds consultative status with the United Nations, thus far in 2012,*  
20 *at least 31 journalists worldwide have lost their lives because of*  
21 *their profession or while on assignment, since 1997, a total of over*  
22 *1,139 journalists worldwide have lost their lives because of their*  
23 *profession or while on assignment, including eight in the United*  
24 *States, and hundreds of journalists are currently imprisoned*  
25 *throughout the world; and*

26 ~~WHEREAS, According to Freedom House, a nonprofit~~  
27 ~~organization with consultant status at the United Nations, press~~  
28 ~~freedom is now in decline in almost every part of the world and~~  
29 ~~only 15 percent of the world’s citizens live in countries that enjoy~~  
30 ~~a free press; and~~

31 ~~WHEREAS, The growing influence of Internet reporting is~~  
32 ~~being injured by censorship of Internet Web sites and imprisonment~~  
33 ~~of online editors, bloggers, and web-based reporters in different~~  
34 ~~countries throughout the world; and~~

35 ~~WHEREAS, A free press within California and throughout the~~  
36 ~~world plays a key role in sustaining and monitoring a healthy~~  
37 ~~democracy, contributing to greater accountability in government,~~  
38 ~~and promoting civic participation and economic development;~~  
39 ~~now, therefore, be it~~

1     *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
2     *California, jointly,* That the Legislature recognizes May 3, 2012,  
3     as World Press Freedom Day 2012, to commend all journalists  
4     around the world for their essential role in promoting accountability  
5     in government and strengthening civil society, to show respect for  
6     journalists who stay committed to their profession despite  
7     numerous personal threats to their safety, and to remember those  
8     journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their  
9     profession; and be it further

10    *Resolved,* The Legislature condemns any action against the  
11    exercise of a free press and reaffirms the importance of a free press  
12    in California and the United States; and be it further

13    *Resolved,* The Legislature encourages all state legislatures  
14    throughout the United States to recognize May 3, 2012, as World  
15    Press Freedom Day 2012, thereby also acknowledging the  
16    importance of a free press in the United States and the world; and  
17    be it further

18    *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit ~~a copy~~ *copies*  
19    of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.