

## Senate Joint Resolution No. 22

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 17

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

[Filed with Secretary of State May 3, 2012.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 22, 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.

WHEREAS, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, proclaims that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, the United Nations declared May 3rd of each year as World Press Freedom Day; and

WHEREAS, May 3rd is now the annual date that celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom, evaluates press freedom around the world, defends the media from attacks on its independence, and pays tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Resolved,* The Legislature encourages 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; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.