

**Introduced by Senator Alquist**

March 14, 2011

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Senate Resolution No. 12—Relative to Greek Independence Day.

1       WHEREAS, The celebration of Greek Independence Day on  
2 March 25th draws inspiration from one of the holiest days for  
3 Greek Orthodox Christians, the Annunciation of the Theotokos.  
4 This is the day that, according to Greek Orthodox teaching, the  
5 Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear a child.  
6 Bishop Germanos of Patras seized the opportunity by raising the  
7 banner of revolution, in an act of defiance against the Turks that  
8 marked the beginning of the War of Independence. Cries of “Zito  
9 H Ellas” and “Eleftheria H Thanatos” can still be heard today.  
10 These freedom fighters, or “klephtes,” as they were called, of  
11 Greece sacrificed much for their country. Kolokotronis, Nikitara,  
12 Karaiskakis, Bouboulina, and Mpotsaris are some of the heroes of  
13 the revolution; and

14       WHEREAS, The struggle for independence was supported  
15 abroad by intellectuals of the day. In addition to the Secret Society  
16 of Friends (“Filiki Etaeria”) and the Sacred Band (“Ieros Lohos”),  
17 prominent figures including Lord Byron of England, and Daniel  
18 Webster and Dr. Samuel Gridly Howe of the United States raised  
19 the interest level among Europeans and Americans, respectively;  
20 and

21       WHEREAS, After centuries of unsuccessful uprisings and failure  
22 of the Ottoman Empire to assimilate and convert the Greeks, the  
23 Greek War of Independence began in 1821 rising up against 400  
24 years of occupation and oppression by the Ottoman Turks. The  
25 origin of the Turkish occupancy began in 1453 with the fall of  
26 Constantinople, currently referred to as Istanbul. All true and

1 faithful Hellenes living in their occupied homeland reacted to the  
2 Turkish oppression and resisted the attempts to deprive the Greeks  
3 of their heritage, freedom, and religion. During the dark years of  
4 the Ottoman occupation, thousands were killed and tortured for  
5 attending church or teaching their children Greek culture, history,  
6 and language. It was the Greek Orthodox Church that helped to  
7 retain their very identity by the institution of “Crypha Scholia”  
8 (Hidden Schools); and

9 WHEREAS, For eight years the fighting ensued, until 1829,  
10 when the Sultan Mahmud II, facing Russian troops at the gates of  
11 Constantinople, accepted Greek independence with the Treaty of  
12 Andrianople; and

13 WHEREAS, March 25, 2011, marks the 190th anniversary of  
14 the rebellion and the struggle of the Greek people from the Ottoman  
15 Empire; and

16 WHEREAS, The Greek War of Independence, also known as  
17 the Greek Revolution, was a successful war waged by Greeks from  
18 1821 to 1831, inclusive, to win independence from the Ottoman  
19 Empire; and

20 WHEREAS, Greek Independence Day reminds us of the strong  
21 principles and bonds that the United States and Greece share,  
22 including commitment to the democratic ideals of justice and  
23 freedom; and

24 WHEREAS, The United States democratic system of  
25 government traces its earliest roots back to ancient Greece. The  
26 leaders of the American Revolution and the framers of the United  
27 States Constitution often drew inspiration from Athenian lawgivers  
28 and philosophers and called the Greek example to mind as they  
29 sought to build the new nation on the foundations of representative  
30 government and free political discourse. The Greeks of 1821 drew  
31 inspiration, in turn, from the ideals and institutions of the fledgling  
32 United States as they waged their own struggle for liberty. Today,  
33 a vibrant Greek democracy serves once again as an inspiration to  
34 its neighbors and the world; and

35 WHEREAS, Greece and America have stood together as friends  
36 and allies from the time America embraced modern Greece’s  
37 struggle for independence 189 years ago. Greeks and Americans  
38 share a love of freedom, liberty, and individual rights. The  
39 friendship between our two nations is based on mutual respect, a  
40 commitment to common goals, and the sharing of fundamental

1 values. Ties of blood and kinship also unite us: the modern  
2 community of approximately three million Greek Americans has  
3 established a natural and enduring bridge between our nations.  
4 Today, we take special note of those citizens and thank them for  
5 their innumerable contributions to our nation’s cultural, economic,  
6 and political heritage; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the 2005 American Community  
8 Survey, released by the United States Census Bureau, there are  
9 roughly 130,000 people in the state who self-identify as Greek in  
10 origin, which is approximately 10 percent of the national total;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, In 2006, the state exported \$123,000,000 in goods  
13 to Greece, while importing \$55,700,000 in goods from Greece  
14 during the same time period; and

15 WHEREAS, Since 1963, the official state motto has been the  
16 Greek word “Eureka.” This Greek word has been on the state seal  
17 since 1849. “Eureka” means “I have found it,” and refers to the  
18 discovery of gold in the state. Archimedes, the famed Greek  
19 mathematician, is said to have exclaimed “Eureka!” when, after  
20 long study, he discovered a method of determining the purity of  
21 gold; and

22 WHEREAS, Greek Americans have become an integral part of  
23 the state, and have made important contributions to mainstream  
24 American society; and

25 WHEREAS, Approximately three million Greek Americans  
26 have joined mainstream society and began to make significant  
27 contributions as Californians in the fields of finance, technology,  
28 law, medicine, education, sports, media, the arts, the military, and  
29 government, as well as in other areas; and

30 WHEREAS, As the Greek-American community, with a  
31 population of approximately three million, prepares for a new era  
32 and creates new history, we must take special note of those citizens  
33 and thank them for their innumerable contributions to our nation’s  
34 cultural, economic, and political heritage; now, therefore, be it

35 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate*  
36 *recognizes March 25, 2011, as Greek Independence Day; and be*  
37 *it further*

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

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