

House Resolution

No. 51

Introduced by Assembly Member V. Manuel Pérez

August 4, 2014

House Resolution No. 51—Relative to immigration.

1 WHEREAS, Inscribed on our nation’s Statue of Liberty are the
2 words, “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses
3 yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming
4 shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp
5 beside the golden door!”; and

6 WHEREAS, The number of unaccompanied Central American
7 children fleeing violence and entering the United States has resulted
8 in 52,000 apprehensions by United States Immigration and
9 Customs Enforcement, with a projected total of 90,000
10 apprehensions of unaccompanied minors expected by the end of
11 September 2014; and

12 WHEREAS, Approximately 28 percent of the children detained
13 this year have been from Honduras, 24 percent from Guatemala,
14 and 21 percent from El Salvador, countries whose respective
15 murder rates are among the top six highest murder rates in the
16 world; and

17 WHEREAS, The violence in Honduras that is driving
18 unaccompanied minors to migrate to the United States can be
19 traced back to the 2009 military coup d’état, and subsequent
20 election of Porfirio Lobo, which the United States immediately
21 recognized despite the fact that Mr. Lobo’s administration retained
22 most of the military figures who perpetrated the illegal coup; and

23 WHEREAS, State-sponsored repression accelerated during the
24 coup and subsequent Lobo Administration, including the use of

1 death squads, the disappearance of opposition leaders, and the
2 killing of innocent civilians and journalists; and

3 WHEREAS, The United States has maintained, and in some
4 areas increased, military and police financing to Honduras, despite
5 compelling evidence linking the Lobo Administration to rampant
6 corruption and human rights abuses; and

7 WHEREAS, The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant
8 Responsibility Act of 1996 expanded the grounds for deportation,
9 resulting in the deportation of 20,000 young immigrants to Central
10 America between 2000 and 2004, inclusive. By 2010, over 125,000
11 immigrants had been deported, with 90 percent sent to Honduras,
12 Guatemala, and El Salvador; and

13 WHEREAS, Many of those deported had come to the United
14 States as young children, had become native English speakers, and
15 had no recollection of their home countries, often lacking
16 proficiency in the native language and customs of their home
17 countries; and

18 WHEREAS, Taking advantage of the decades of civil war and
19 unrest in Central America, and lacking the cultural competency to
20 earn an honest living, many of those deported fell back into the
21 gang lifestyle they had learned in the United States and began
22 initiating new members to what had historically been
23 American-based street gangs; and

24 WHEREAS, The Central American gangs that resulted from
25 the deportation policies of the United States have resulted in
26 rampant violence across Central America, but most notably in
27 Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, and includes homicides,
28 kidnappings, human trafficking, extortions, and smuggling of
29 drugs, automobiles, and weapons; and

30 WHEREAS, The Office of the United Nations High
31 Commissioner for Refugees urges the United States to grant
32 refugee status to Central American children who have crossed the
33 border, estimating that 60 percent of the children who have fled
34 into the United States have been forcibly displaced, qualifying
35 them for asylum under international law; and

36 WHEREAS, Central American governments take full
37 responsibility for the flow of unaccompanied children to the United
38 States, recognizing that their respective countries could and should
39 do more to mitigate the push factors driving so many children to

1 flee to the United States, including lack of economic development
2 opportunities, rampant poverty, and political corruption; and

3 WHEREAS, Central American countries acknowledge their
4 responsibility to ensure successful integration for the
5 unaccompanied children who are repatriated back home; and

6 WHEREAS, The actions and rhetoric of some Californians who
7 have blocked access to federal immigration buses transporting
8 detained minors to federal immigration facilities demonstrates the
9 need to educate the public about the role of American foreign
10 policy has had in creating the instability that is driving so many
11 young people to leave their homelands, in the belief that increased
12 understanding will lead to greater compassion and responsibility
13 towards these vulnerable individuals caught up in a situation not
14 of their making; and

15 WHEREAS, The Assembly acknowledges the role of United
16 States foreign and domestic policy in destabilizing Central America
17 and driving unaccompanied minors to emigrate from their
18 homeland and recognizes that the formulation of stronger
19 partnerships between Central American countries, California, and
20 the United States as a whole are necessary in order to foster
21 economic development in sending countries to curtail mass
22 migration and improve public safety, tourism, and education; now,
23 therefore, be it

24 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
25 Assembly declares that the residents of California, as residents of
26 the United States, have a duty to respect the human dignity of those
27 immigrants and ensure they are afforded equal protection under
28 the laws of the United States, including safe and unobstructed
29 passage to federal immigration processing facilities, medical care,
30 and education, as well as access to a mode of communication that
31 can help facilitate their repatriation back to Central America when
32 doing so does not endanger their lives and safety; and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
34 of this resolution to the Governor, the Superintendent of Public
35 Instruction, the State Library, and the California State Archives.

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