

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 12, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 126

Introduced by Assembly Member Atkins

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Eggman, Grove, Melendez, and Quirk-Silva *Quirk-Silva, Achadjian, Alejo, Allen, Ammiano, Bigelow, Bloom, Bocanegra, Bonilla, Bonta, Bradford, Brown, Buchanan, Ian Calderon, Campos, Chau, Chávez, Chesbro, Conway, Cooley, Dababneh, Daly, Dickinson, Donnelly, Fong, Fox, Frazier, Beth Gaines, Garcia, Gatto, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gray, Hagman, Roger Hernández, Holden, Jones, Jones-Sawyer, Linder, Logue, Lowenthal, Maienschein, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nestande, Olsen, Pan, Patterson, Perea, John A. Pérez, V. Manuel Pérez, Quirk, Ridley-Thomas, Rodriguez, Salas, Skinner, Stone, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wieckowski, Wilk, Williams, and Yamada*)

April 1, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 126—Relative to women veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 126, as amended, Atkins. Women veterans.

This measure would proclaim June 12, 2014, as Women Veterans' Day and urge all citizens to join in celebrating the many contributions of women to our military forces.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Women have proudly served their country
- 2 throughout all periods of the history of the United States, whether

1 disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and
2 Civil War, as nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots
3 in Afghanistan; and

4 WHEREAS, Women have formally been a part of the United
5 States Armed Forces since the inception of the Army Nurse Corps
6 in 1901, but have informally served since the inception of our
7 nation's military; and

8 WHEREAS, During the American Revolution, women served
9 on the battlefield alongside the men, mainly as nurses, water
10 bearers, often called "Molly Pitchers," cooks, laundresses, and
11 saboteurs, and despite Army regulations that only men could enlist,
12 women who wanted to join in the fighting circumvented the rules
13 by masquerading as young men or boys; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1917, the Navy announced it would open
15 enlistment to women and about 12,000 female yeomen entered the
16 Navy and filled a variety of jobs including draftsmen, interpreters,
17 couriers, and translators; and

18 WHEREAS, Three hundred seven women enlisted in the Marine
19 Corps during World War I. Like their sisters in the Navy, they
20 were limited to the enlisted ranks and worked mainly in
21 Washington, D.C., doing various administrative jobs. Women's
22 service contributions in World War I showed that they either had,
23 or could quickly learn, nontraditional skills needed by the military;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Following Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized new
26 women's components for each of the services and increased the
27 number of active duty positions in the Army and Navy Nurse
28 Corps. In May 1942, the Army was given the authority to establish
29 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, also known as the WAACs.
30 The Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps followed suit, but rather
31 than making women an auxiliary component, they opted to enroll
32 them in the reserves on the same basis as their male counterparts;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, At the end of the war in 1945, of the approximately
35 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces, about 280,000
36 were women; and

37 WHEREAS, With the passage of the Women's Armed Services
38 Integration Act of 1948, women became a permanent part of the
39 United States military, but women continued to be restricted to 2
40 percent of the military population. That restriction was finally

1 lifted in 1967 with the amendment of the Women’s Armed Services
2 Integration Act, which also opened senior officer ranks to women;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The early 1990s were a historic time for women
5 in the military with over 40,000 women deploying in support of
6 the Persian Gulf War, making women service members more
7 visible in the eyes of the public. In addition, in 1992, the Defense
8 Authorization Act repealed combat exclusion laws that had
9 prevented women from flying combat aircrafts; and

10 WHEREAS, Women who have served in the United States
11 military are often referred to as “invisible veterans” because their
12 service contributions until the 1970s went largely unrecognized
13 by politicians, the media, academia, and the general public; and

14 WHEREAS, Even though women have been officially serving
15 in the military since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901,
16 they have not always been considered qualified for veteran status
17 for the purpose of receiving benefits from the Department of
18 Veterans Affairs. Even after women were granted veteran status,
19 issues of access, exclusion, and improper management of their
20 health care still remained; and

21 WHEREAS, It was not until well after World War II that women
22 who served in the military began to officially be recognized as
23 veterans; and

24 WHEREAS, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the
25 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
26 recognized through laws that granted these women with veteran
27 status for their time in service. This opened the doors for women
28 to take advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from
29 the federal and state governments, the Department of Veterans
30 Affairs, and other veteran service organizations; and

31 WHEREAS, The 1980 decennial census marked the first time
32 that information on women veterans was ever captured in a large
33 national survey. At the time of the 1980 decennial census, women
34 made up just over 2 percent of the veteran population. Today, that
35 proportion has increased to almost 8 percent; and

36 WHEREAS, Over the past 20 years, the Veterans Health
37 Administration (VHA) has introduced initiatives designed to
38 improve health care access and quality of care for women veterans;
39 and

1 WHEREAS, In 2008, VHA's Women Veterans Health Strategic
2 Health Care Group began a five-year plan to redesign the nation's
3 health care delivery system for women. A fundamental component
4 of this plan was to ensure that all women veterans had access to
5 comprehensive primary care from skilled women's health
6 providers; and

7 WHEREAS, There are currently over 2 million women veterans
8 living in the United States and Puerto Rico and of those 2 million,
9 184,774 make California their home; now, therefore, be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
11 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature, hereby proclaims June
12 12, 2014, as Women Veterans' Day, and urges all citizens to join
13 in celebrating the many contributions of women to our military
14 forces; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
16 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.