

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 154

Introduced by Assembly Member Gray
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Olsen)
(Coauthors: Senators Cannella and Galgiani)

May 27, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 154—Relative to pupil instruction.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 154, as introduced, Gray. Modesto City Schools: World Geography-World Religion class.

This measure would acknowledge and applaud the Modesto City Schools' initiative and achievement in teaching the unique World Geography-World Religion class as a grade 9 required course for the last 15 years, and would recommend that the class be considered for adoption by other school districts in the state.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The United States Declaration of Independence
2 states that all men are created equal, and the Holy Sikh Scriptures
3 contain hymns like, "One Father, and we are children of the One"
4 and "Recognize ye, all Humanity as the Same"; and
5 WHEREAS, Sikhism has 25 million followers, and is the fifth
6 largest world religion after Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and
7 Buddhism; and
8 WHEREAS, Nearly 300,000 residents of California are Sikhs,
9 who, by the dint of their hard work, have distinguished themselves
10 in all fields, as documented in Resolution Chapter 161 of the

1 Statutes of 2010, Resolution Chapter 60 of the Statutes of 2012,
2 and Resolution Chapter 105 of the Statutes of 2013; and

3 WHEREAS, Sikhism was founded in Northwestern India by
4 Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and is not a branch of another religion,
5 and Sikhs now have global distribution with Gurdwaras in more
6 than 72 countries; and

7 WHEREAS, Large numbers of Americans are physically or
8 psychologically attacked on the basis of their race, skin color,
9 ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, sex,
10 gender identity, religion, culture, or age; and

11 WHEREAS, Turbaned Sikh children experience bullying at
12 more than double the national rate; and

13 WHEREAS, The 115-member Community Safe Schools
14 Committee of Modesto met for 14 months and presented in 1998
15 a set of principles affirming respect for all; and, since 1999, the
16 Modesto City Schools has engaged in the nation's most direct
17 experiment in using the public school curriculum to promote
18 respect for religious freedom and diversity; and

19 WHEREAS, The Modesto City Schools' World
20 Geography-World Religion class examines the geographical
21 location, history, culture, and major beliefs of Hinduism,
22 Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and

23 WHEREAS, The nine character traits of responsibility and
24 respect, which are courage, honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility,
25 civility, compassion, initiative and perseverance, are stressed
26 throughout the class, and pupils are taught how to make appropriate
27 comments without offending other pupils; and

28 WHEREAS, The class has been very successful in helping Sikh
29 pupils feel more accepted and in helping pupils understand their
30 First Amendment rights, understand and practice the character
31 traits of respect and responsibility, become informed about the
32 religious diversity in their community and the world, and obtain
33 greater understanding about the six major world religions; and

34 WHEREAS, The Modesto City Schools is perhaps the only
35 school district in the state that requires all pupils to learn about
36 and understand world religions; now, therefore, be it

37 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
38 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature acknowledges and
39 applauds the Modesto City Schools' initiative and achievements
40 in teaching the unique World Geography-World Religion class as

1 a grade 9 required course for the last 15 years, and recommends
2 that the class be considered for adoption by other school districts
3 in the state; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
5 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution to the
6 Members of the Legislature, the Superintendent of Public
7 Instruction, the county superintendents of schools for transmission
8 to all school district superintendents, and other interested
9 organizations or persons.

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