

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 46

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 99

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 46—Relative to the National Academy of Sciences sesquicentennial anniversary celebration.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 6, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 46, Hill. National Academy of Sciences.

This measure would honor the sesquicentennial of the National Academy of Sciences.

WHEREAS, The year 2013 commemorates the sesquicentennial of the year in which President Abraham Lincoln signed an act incorporating the National Academy of Sciences to advise the federal government on “any subject of science or art”; and

WHEREAS, As science and technology began to play increasingly important roles in national priorities and public life, the National Academy of Sciences expanded to include the National Research Council in 1916, which was created by Executive order of President Woodrow Wilson for the purpose of conducting the institution’s science policy and technical work by working outside the framework of government to ensure unbiased, credible advice on matters of science, technology, and medicine; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine were founded in 1964 and 1970, respectively, under the same congressional charter as the National Academy of Sciences to perform similar advisory roles; and

WHEREAS, These private, nonprofit institutions enlist the aid of the nation’s most knowledgeable scientists, engineers, health professionals, and other experts who volunteer their time to provide authoritative, independent advice on many of the pressing challenges that face the nation and the world; and

WHEREAS, Each year a small number of distinguished individuals are elected by their peers to membership in the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine, bringing the total membership of these three institutions to include more than 6,000 of the nation’s most accomplished scientists, engineers, and health professionals living today; and

WHEREAS, The earliest reports of these institutions addressed United States weights, measures, and coinage; examined magnetic deviation of compasses on the Navy’s new ironclad warships; and proposed the creation of the National Park Service and the national park system; while other reports contributed to the founding of the United States Geological Survey

and the reorganization of the National Weather Service and Signal Corps;
and

WHEREAS, Since their inception, these institutions have also suggested methods for controlling landslides, as during the construction of the Panama Canal, studied highway safety as the nation's transportation system began to expand, issued reports on the feasibility of the atomic bomb, which led to the Manhattan Project, and studied the biological effects of atomic radiation, which led to national policy on this issue; and

WHEREAS, In 1962, a landmark report was issued at the request of President John F. Kennedy regarding an evaluation of the research on conservation and the development of the nation's natural resources, and in the 1970s and 1980s, important studies on motor vehicle emission standards and acid rain were influential in bringing national and international attention to these issues; and

WHEREAS, On the health front, in the 1980s, the first reports to identify research needed to confront the HIV/AIDS epidemic were issued; other studies led to a blueprint for the Human Genome Project. A landmark 1999 study on medical errors also galvanized the medical community and sparked a national movement to improve patient safety; and

WHEREAS, The significance of these institutions' scientific reports has come not only through their value to and impact on California scientific disciplines of biotechnology and high technology, but also as those reports have informed policy on such diverse areas as marine health, greenhouse gas emissions, evaluation in education, water policy, and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, The state has been not only the beneficiary of scientific policy advice, but also its benefactor, as more members of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine live and work in California than in any other state; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences continues to provide sound scientific, technological, and health policy advice; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in honoring the National Academy of Sciences for its 150 years of commitment to providing unbiased, peer-reviewed advice on science, technology, and medicine to our nation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the National Academy of Sciences and to the author for appropriate distribution.