

Senate Resolution No. 42

Introduced by Senator Corbett

Relative to Norway's Constitution Day

WHEREAS, Norway's Constitution Day, which is celebrated on May 17, commemorates the date when the nation's constitution was signed at Eidsvoll on May 17, 1814. In Norwegian, this day is usually referred to as syttende mai (May 17) or Nasjonaldagen (The National Day); and

WHEREAS, The Norwegian Parliament, known as Storting, held the first May 17 celebrations in 1836. From that point onwards, it was regarded as the national day. The first children's parade was held in 1870. Interestingly, World War II ended in Norway only nine days before Constitution Day — on May 8, 1945. This was the time when the occupying German forces surrendered in Norway; and

WHEREAS, Constitution Day celebrations follow a traditional pattern of parades involving schools, high school graduates, bands, and other members and organizations within the local community. Many people, especially children, dress in their finest clothes on this day. Some choose to wear a bunad, which is a traditional Norwegian costume. There are many games, activities, and social gatherings on this day; and

WHEREAS, From 1906 onwards, the Norwegian royal family has gathered on the balcony of the Royal Palace in Oslo, which is Norway's capital city, to wave to the marching children on Constitution Day each year; and

WHEREAS, Many Norwegians and people with Norwegian ancestry also celebrate the day in different countries around the world. Celebrations, dinners, and festivals are held in various places across the United States. These are supported by organizations, such as Sons of Norway; and

WHEREAS, In some Australian cities in previous years, people of Norwegian heritage participated in a special street parade to celebrate Constitution Day on May 17. The Orkney Norway Friendship Association celebrates Norway's Constitution Day in Orkney, Scotland, to recognize the islands' strong historic links with Norway; and

WHEREAS, Norway’s Constitution Day is a public holiday in Norway. Schools, public offices, and businesses are closed. Road users need to take into account that some streets, particularly in the town centers, will be closed and there may be traffic because of the parades that take place on that day, which attract crowds; and

WHEREAS, The bunad, a traditional Norwegian dress, can be worn during Constitution Day. It varies in appearance from region to region, and may feature flower motifs, stripes, and pleats. Embroidery can be used on many different parts of the costume, including bonnets, belts, aprons, skirts, shirts, and bodices; and

WHEREAS, An abundance of flags are also seen on this day. The Norwegian flag is red with an indigo blue Scandinavian cross outlined in white that extends to the edges of the flag. The vertical part of the cross is shifted to the hoist side in the style of the Dannebrog, the flag of Denmark; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate hereby honors Norway’s 200th Constitution Day; and be it further

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

Senate Resolution No. 42 read and adopted by the Senate May 19, 2014.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate