

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 26, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 67

Introduced by Senator Liu
(Principal coauthor: Senator Hancock)
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Buchanan)

August 13, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 67—Relative to *School* Attendance Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 67, as amended, Liu. *School* Attendance Awareness Month.

This measure would designate September 2013 as *School* Attendance Awareness Month, and would encourage public officials, educators, and communities in California to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Good *school* attendance is essential to pupil
2 achievement and graduation, and systemic approaches are needed
3 to reduce chronic absenteeism rates in California, with a focus
4 starting as early as kindergarten; and
5 WHEREAS, Chronic absence, missing 10 percent or more of
6 school, which can be just two or three days a month, for any reason,
7 including both excused and unexcused absences, is a proven
8 predictor of academic trouble; and
9 WHEREAS, A pupil's chronic absence is a predictor of
10 below-grade-level reading proficiency by the third grade and course
11 failure and eventual dropout later in that pupil's career, and chronic

1 absence thereby weakens our communities and our local
2 economies; and

3 WHEREAS, The impact of chronic absence hits low-income
4 pupils and children of color particularly hard if they do not have
5 the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom.
6 Low-income pupils and children of color are more likely to face
7 systemic barriers to getting to school, such as unreliable
8 transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or
9 unaffordable housing, and even unfair ~~disciplinary~~ *disciplinary*
10 policies; and

11 WHEREAS, Chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap
12 that separates low-income pupils from their peers, since pupils
13 from low-income families are both more likely to be chronically
14 absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing
15 school. Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling
16 schools, since it is hard to measure improvement in classroom
17 instruction if pupils are not in class to benefit from the
18 improvement efforts; and

19 WHEREAS, Improving *school* attendance and reducing chronic
20 absence take commitment, collaboration, and tailored approaches
21 to address particular challenges and strengths in each community;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom
24 Torlakson, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, and Secretary of
25 California Health and Human Services Diana Dooley jointly hosted
26 an interagency forum on chronic absence to encourage state and
27 local collaboration to improve the overall health, safety, and
28 well-being of our children by promoting public awareness and
29 reforms that improve school attendance; and

30 WHEREAS, The Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1357 of the
31 2009–10 Regular Session to establish a definition and reporting
32 mechanisms for chronic absence and Assembly Bill 97 of the
33 2013–14 Regular Session to establish chronic absence as a state
34 priority for our schools to be included in the recently enacted local
35 control accountability plans; and

36 WHEREAS, Schools and *school* districts must do more to track,
37 calculate, and share the data on how many and which pupils are
38 chronically absent so that schools and communities can work to
39 deliver the right interventions to the right pupils; and

1 WHEREAS, All pupils, even those who show up regularly, are
2 affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time
3 reviewing for pupils who missed lessons; and

4 WHEREAS, ~~Attendance~~ *School attendance* can be improved,
5 and chronic absence significantly reduced, when schools, parents,
6 and communities work together to monitor and promote good
7 attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to
8 school; now, therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
10 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature designate September 2013
11 as *School Attendance Awareness Month* in the State of California,
12 and encourages public officials, educators, and communities in
13 California to observe the month with appropriate activities and
14 programs; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Legislature join communities across our
16 nation to increase awareness of the importance of school attendance
17 by addressing attendance barriers and the root causes of chronic
18 absence; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
20 this resolution to the ~~authors~~ *author and coauthors* for appropriate
21 distribution.