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Introduced by Senator Yee

March 10, 2014

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 96—Relative to Sunshine Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 96, as introduced, Yee. Sunshine Week.

This measure would designate March 16, 2014, through March 22, 2014, as Sunshine Week.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, California has a long tradition in support of open  
2 government and access to government records; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1968, California enacted the California Public  
4 Records Act that expressly declared that “access to information  
5 concerning the conduct of the people’s business is a fundamental  
6 and necessary right of every person in this state”; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1953, California enacted the Ralph M. Brown  
8 Open Meetings Act guaranteeing the public’s right to attend and  
9 participate in local governing bodies; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1968, the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act  
11 was adopted by the State to mandate open meetings of state  
12 agencies, boards, and commissions; and

13 WHEREAS, California voters approved Proposition 59, a state  
14 constitutional amendment, also known as the “Sunshine  
15 Amendment,” in 2004 that furthers open government protections  
16 and the rights of voters; and

17 WHEREAS, Open government reforms continue to spread across  
18 the country, including the adoption of open data policies to urge

1 innovation and economic development through the use of  
2 high-value government data; and

3 WHEREAS, California entrepreneurs created the information  
4 technology revolution and are creating opportunities for  
5 government to use technology to improve performance,  
6 transparency, and trust; and

7 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama issued an Open  
8 Government Directive to all federal departments and agencies that  
9 required the federal government to take steps towards a more open  
10 government including publishing government information online  
11 with the presumption of openness, to improve the quality of  
12 government information, and to institutionalize a culture of open  
13 government within departments and agencies; and

14 WHEREAS, Many local governments have been leaders in open  
15 records and public meetings and the cities of San Francisco,  
16 Oakland, West Sacramento, and Los Angeles and the County of  
17 San Mateo have adopted open data policies; and

18 WHEREAS, The Legislature has asked the voters of California  
19 to affirm the people's mandate for open government through  
20 Proposition 42, that will appear on the June 3, 2014, statewide  
21 primary election ballot; and

22 WHEREAS, With an inaugural grant from the Knight  
23 Foundation, American Society of News Editors launched Sunshine  
24 Week in March 2005, and it continues to be celebrated each year  
25 in mid-March to coincide with National Freedom of Information  
26 Day and President James Madison's birthday on March 16; and

27 WHEREAS, Although originally created by journalists, Sunshine  
28 Week is about the public's right to know what its government is  
29 doing and why; and

30 WHEREAS, Sunshine Week is now a national initiative to  
31 promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and  
32 freedom of information. Participants include news media, civic  
33 groups, libraries, nonprofit entities, schools, and others interested  
34 in the public's right to know; and

35 WHEREAS, Sunshine Week seeks to enlighten and empower  
36 people to play an active role in all levels of government, and to  
37 give people access to information that makes their lives better and  
38 their communities stronger; and

39 WHEREAS, The coverage, commentaries, and activities  
40 promoting open government during Sunshine Week have led to

1 tangible, meaningful changes to people’s lives, and the laws that  
2 govern them; and

3 WHEREAS, The California Newspaper Publishers’ Association,  
4 California Forward, the League of Women Voters of California,  
5 Californians Aware, First Amendment Coalition, and other  
6 nongovernmental organizations continue to work alongside media  
7 and government allies to enhance public access to their  
8 government; and

9 WHEREAS, Sunshine Week is increasing public awareness and  
10 people are playing more of a role in the actions that affect their  
11 communities. People are learning what kinds of information they  
12 have a right to see, how and where to obtain that information, and  
13 what to do if someone tries to prevent them from accessing it; now,  
14 therefore, be it

15 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
16 *thereof concurring*, That Sunshine Week is a celebration of the  
17 public’s commitment to openness and an exploration of what open  
18 government means in a technology-enhanced future; and be it  
19 further

20 *Resolved*, That the Legislature hereby designates March 16,  
21 2014, through March 22, 2014, as Sunshine Week and encourages  
22 all Californians to participate in appropriate activities relating to  
23 open government and access to public information; and be it further

24 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate provide copies of  
25 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.