

## **Senate Resolution No. 51**

**Introduced by Senators Lara and De León**

Relative to immigration

WHEREAS, California's prosperity is intimately tied to the tenacity, innovativeness, and diversity of its people; and

WHEREAS, The state has made tremendous progress in recent years in recognizing undocumented immigrants as valued members of society by enacting laws that promote the safety and livelihood of immigrant families, including passage of the California DREAM Act, the TRUST Act, and the Safe and Responsible Drivers Act; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, exactly 20 years ago, the voters of California approved Proposition 187, now considered one of the most controversial measures in California's ballot history; and

WHEREAS, Although the vast majority of the measure was eventually found to be unconstitutional and unenforceable by the federal courts, its introduction and approval devastated immigrant communities throughout California, pushing undocumented people further into the shadows and spreading rampant fear of public officials and police; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 187 is just one example of a long and troubled history of targeting and blaming a group of people for societal and economic hardships in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Throughout our history immigrants have had to confront hostile environments despite their contributions to our economy; and

WHEREAS, The late 19th century was marked by a series of efforts to explicitly limit Chinese migration to the United States, particularly to California. Although Chinese immigrants provided a needed workforce for the development of the West, including construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, growing anti-Chinese sentiments fomented fears that mass Chinese immigration would threaten American wages and standards of living; and

WHEREAS, These attitudes led to the passage of discriminatory laws. A new California Constitution in 1879 explicitly banned individuals of Chinese descent from public and corporate employment

and authorized the state government to determine which individuals would be allowed to reside in the state; and

WHEREAS, Following California's lead, Congress and President Chester A. Arthur approved the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 to completely restrict Chinese immigration; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 14 was approved in 1964 to counteract the effects of the Rumford Fair Housing Act, which prohibited housing discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, sex, marital status, physical handicap, or familial status. It was also held unconstitutional on the basis that it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Voters approved Proposition 21, which would have repealed a state law that required the racial integration of schools and was ultimately declared unconstitutional by the courts because it stood in direct violation of the precedent set by *Brown v. the Board of Education*; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 187 is the most recent modern example of California's troubled history and relationship with minorities and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Governor Pete Wilson championed Proposition 187 as a part of his reelection in 1994, pursuing a scathing campaign against undocumented parents and their children; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 187 would have specifically barred the children of undocumented immigrants from attending public schools, required every school district to verify the legal status of every child and parent, prohibited colleges and universities from accepting undocumented students, and prohibited public agencies and publicly funded health care facilities from providing services to immigrants suspected of being undocumented; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 187 would have required teachers, doctors, social workers, and law enforcement personnel to verify the immigration status of families and report to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service any individual reasonably suspected of being illegally present in the United States, thereby turning civilians into immigration agents; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 187 served as the unfortunate precedent for the draconian laws recently adopted in Arizona (SB 1070) and Alabama (HB 56); and

WHEREAS, As a society, we have learned time and time again that discrimination against minorities ultimately does not benefit anyone, but rather hurts our economy and creates social dissonance; and

WHEREAS, That, after 20 years, the Legislature expressly acknowledges the harm caused to Californians through passage of Proposition 187 and its corresponding campaign. Its passage serves as a lesson as the Legislature moves forward to provide for the well-being of all Californians, regardless of their immigration status, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic position; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That the Senate recognizes June 23, 2014, the date marking the 20th anniversary of the qualification of Proposition 187 for the November 1994 ballot, as a day to celebrate California’s diversity and a united future; 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. 51 read and adopted by the Senate June 23, 2014.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate