

Senate Resolution No. 52
Introduced by Senator Morrell

Relative to the 4th of July

WHEREAS, July 4, 2014, marks the 238th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and by the adoption of that document — formally entitled, “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America” — the nation we today know as the United States of America officially came into being, an occasion forever memorialized by President Abraham Lincoln in the words of his Gettysburg Address as when “... our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal”; and

WHEREAS, On June 7, 1776, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at a location today known as Independence Hall, Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee brought the following resolution before the Second Continental Congress of the United Colonies: “Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved”; and

WHEREAS, On June 8, 1776, Lee’s resolution was referred to a committee of the whole of the Continental Congress, at which time they spent most of that day, as well as June 10, debating independence; and

WHEREAS, On June 11, 1776, a “Committee of Five” — with Thomas Jefferson of Virginia being picked unanimously as its first member, and also including John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut — was charged with drafting a declaration of independence for consideration by the Continental Congress; and

WHEREAS, The members of the “Committee of Five” assigned Jefferson the task of producing a draft declaration, and on June 28, 1776, he produced a draft that, with minor changes by the committee members, was forwarded to the Continental Congress for its further consideration; and

WHEREAS, On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted the Lee resolution upon the affirmative vote of 12 of the 13 colonial delegations, an occasion that delegate and future President John Adams detailed to his wife Abigail in a letter written July 3, 1776, as follows: “Yesterday the greatest Question was decided, which ever was debated in America, and a greater perhaps, never was or will be decided among Men”; and

WHEREAS, On July 4, 1776, after further debate and changes to the committee document, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence establishing the United States of America, to which John Hancock that day affixed his signature, with 55 other delegates representing the 13 colonies — now states of the newly created nation — signing the declaration within the next several weeks; and

WHEREAS, The 4th of July is a day unlike any other — in the history of the United States of America, and indeed, the world — in that not only is it the day that an infant nation formally defied the most powerful empire on earth in a quest for freedom, liberty, and independence, but even more importantly because on that day this new nation declared as a “self-evident truth” — known and knowable to all persons at all times in all places throughout the world — the radical notion that “all men are created equal ... endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”; and

WHEREAS, Since its adoption and bold pronouncement more than two centuries ago, the Declaration of Independence and the principles that animate that timeless document have inspired literally billions of persons around the world to pursue freedom in their own nations, for themselves and their own loved ones, and for their fellow men and women, and remain today an imperfectly unrealized goal to which all Americans and all who cherish liberty must rededicate themselves, just as the drafters and signers of the Declaration of Independence did by declaring: “with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge[d] to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor”; and

WHEREAS, The United States and California have a long and generous tradition of welcoming people from all nations to our shores. This tradition continues today as we invite all who yearn to be free, with a respect for the rule of law, to join us and in the spirit of good will mutually pledge ourselves to the principles laid out in the Declaration of Independence; and

WHEREAS, Preserving civil liberty is one of the most important blessings and a most valuable inheritance this side of heaven. Therefore, a basic knowledge of America’s political principles contained in our United States Constitution and Declaration of Independence is necessary for the promotion of prosperity, virtue, and public happiness. In the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, this system of good laws and statutes that limit government’s powers and ranks the citizen above the state for our mutual benefit, is the foundation and the cord that link the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving people together; and

WHEREAS, On this and every 4th of July, it is both proper and fitting that the institutions of California government, and indeed all Californians, express heartfelt gratitude and indebtedness to those men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, and in particular to those who have suffered the injuries of battle and who have made the ultimate sacrifice in protecting freedom and liberty around the world, recalling the words of President Abraham Lincoln that, as a result of their profound sacrifice, “... this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate of the State of California does — and intends to every year immediately preceding the 4th of July — take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate July 4, 2014, and the 238th anniversary of the birth of our great nation and the signing of the Declaration of Independence that this day represents; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate of the State of California calls upon all the people of the great State of California, and the United States of America, to take the opportunity of the 4th of July holiday to obtain a greater knowledge and understanding of the facts and circumstances that compelled the 13 original colonies to declare their independence, and of the timeless principles of liberty, equality, and self-determination that rest at the heart of the Declaration of Independence; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate of the State of California, on behalf of a grateful citizenry, hereby expresses its heartfelt thanks, appreciation, and prayers to all who have served — and who currently serve — in the Armed Forces of the United States, in recognition of the countless sacrifices made and the indispensable role these brave men and women have played, even before the founding of our nation on July 4, 1776, in preserving, protecting, and defending the freedoms and liberties of

all Americans, and expanding freedom throughout the world; and be it further

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

Senate Resolution No. 52 read and adopted by the Senate July 3, 2014.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate