

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 2

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian

December 1, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2—Relative to the Persian New Year.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 2, as introduced, Nazarian. Persian New Year.

This measure would recognize the Persian New Year celebration.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Nowrūz, meaning the “New Day” is the name of
2 the New Year in the Persian calendar; and

3 WHEREAS, Nowrūz marks the first day of spring and the
4 beginning of the year in the Persian calendar. It is celebrated on
5 the day of the astronomical Northward equinox, which usually
6 occurs on March 20 or the following day depending on where it
7 is observed; and

8 WHEREAS, In Persian mythology, King Jamshid is credited
9 with the founding of Nowrūz, while others suggest that it was
10 founded by Zoroaster himself, although there is no clear date of
11 its origin. Celebrating the Vernal equinox may also have been an
12 old Babylonian tradition known before 2340 B.C.; and

13 WHEREAS, Nowrūz is celebrated and observed principally in
14 Iran and has spread to other parts of the world, including parts of
15 Central Asia, the Caucasus, Northwestern China, the Crimea, and
16 some groups in the Balkans. In Iran, Nowrūz is an official holiday
17 lasting for 13 days during which most national functions, including

1 schools, are off and festivities take place. Also the Canadian
2 Parliament, by unanimous consent, passed a bill on March 30,
3 2009, to add Nowrūz to the national calendar of Canada; and

4 WHEREAS, The most important activity in the celebration of
5 Nowrūz is setting the “haft-seen table” which literally means a
6 table of seven items that start with the letter “s.” The table often
7 includes items such as sumac (crushed spice of berries), senjed
8 (sweet dry fruit of a lotus tree), serkeh (vinegar), and seeb (apples);
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Nowrūz invites us to contemplate nature’s power
11 of renewal and rejuvenation, to look more deeply, not just into the
12 green world outside, but at our human nature as well; and

13 WHEREAS, For the people celebrating Nowrūz, it is a time to
14 appreciate their rich heritage and to move forward with hope for
15 a prosperous new year ahead filled with health, wealth, love, joy,
16 and success; and

17 WHEREAS, According to figures from the 2000 United States
18 Census, over one-half of all Iranian immigrants in the United States
19 lived in the State of California. In 2000, that figure was 55.9
20 percent or 158,613 residents. The states with the next largest
21 Iranian immigrant populations were New York, with 17,323
22 residents or 6.1 percent of the population, Texas, with 15,581
23 residents or 5.5 percent of the population, Virginia, with 10,889
24 residents or 3.8 percent of the population, and Maryland, with
25 9,733 residents or 3.4 percent of the population; and

26 WHEREAS, According to the 2000 United States Census, the
27 largest community of Iranian descent in the United States resides
28 in California, concentrated in the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills
29 area. The number of Iranian descent people in this area is greater
30 than the Iranian populations in the next 20 states combined; and

31 WHEREAS, The Iranian population in California has grown to
32 over 200,000 residents according to the 2010 United States Census.
33 However, Iranian organizations and the Iranian Community
34 believes the correct number may be four times that amount; and

35 WHEREAS, The Small Business Administration conducted a
36 study in 2008 that found that Iranian immigrants were among the
37 top 20 immigrant groups with the highest rate of business
38 ownership, contributing substantially to the national economy; and

1 WHEREAS, Iranian Americans have founded and served in
2 senior leadership positions of many major American companies;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The Los Angeles City Council designated the
5 intersection of Westwood Boulevard and Wilkins Avenue in West
6 Los Angeles as “Persian Square.” The first Persian business in the
7 city opened in 1974 on the corner of Westwood Boulevard and
8 Wilkins Avenue. Since then there has been an increase of Persian
9 businesses and residents into the area. Many of the businesses on
10 Westwood Boulevard, between Wilshire Boulevard and Ohio
11 Avenue, are owned and operated by people of Persian cultural
12 identity; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
14 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature joins the Persian and other
15 communities throughout the state in celebrating March 21, 2015,
16 as the beginning of the Persian New Year and extends best wishes
17 for a peaceful and prosperous Nowrūz to all Californians; and be
18 it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
20 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.