

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 24, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 2

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Baker, Calderon, Chávez, Dodd, Cristina Garcia, Lackey, McCarty, Rodriguez, Santiago, Steinorth, and Mark Stone)

(Coauthors: Senators Allen, Block, Hall, Hertzberg, Leno, Nielsen, Stone, Vidak, and Wieckowski)

December 1, 2014

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 2, as amended, 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

1 its origin. Celebrating the Vernal equinox may also have been an
2 old Babylonian tradition known before 2340 B.C.; and

3 WHEREAS, Nowrūz is celebrated and observed principally in
4 Iran and has spread to other parts of the world, including parts of
5 Central Asia, the Caucasus, Northwestern China, the Crimea, and
6 some groups in the Balkans. In Iran, Nowrūz is an official holiday
7 lasting for 13 days during which most national functions, including
8 schools, are off and festivities take place. Also the Canadian
9 Parliament, by unanimous consent, passed a bill on March 30,
10 2009, to add Nowrūz to the national calendar of Canada; and

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, According to figures from the 2000 United States
25 Census, over one-half of all Iranian immigrants in the United States
26 lived in the State of California. In 2000, that figure was 55.9
27 percent or 158,613 residents. The states with the next largest
28 Iranian immigrant populations were New York, with 17,323
29 residents or 6.1 percent of the population, Texas, with 15,581
30 residents or 5.5 percent of the population, Virginia, with 10,889
31 residents or 3.8 percent of the population, and Maryland, with
32 9,733 residents or 3.4 percent of the population; and

33 WHEREAS, According to the 2000 United States Census, the
34 largest community of Iranian descent in the United States resides
35 in California, concentrated in the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills
36 area. The number of ~~Iranian descent~~ people *of Iranian descent* in
37 this area is greater than the Iranian populations in the next 20 states
38 combined; and

39 WHEREAS, The Iranian population in California has grown to
40 over 200,000 residents according to the 2010 United States Census.

1 However, Iranian organizations and the Iranian Community
2 believes the correct number may be four times that amount; and

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

7 WHEREAS, Iranian Americans have founded and served in
8 senior leadership positions of many major American companies;
9 and

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

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

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