

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 1, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 19, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 33

Introduced by Assembly Member Atkins

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Eggman ~~and Irwin~~, Irwin, Achadjian, Alejo, Travis Allen, Baker, Bigelow, Bloom, Bonilla, Bonta, Brough, Brown, Burke, Calderon, Campos, Chang, Chau, Chávez, Chiu, Chu, Cooley, Cooper, Dababneh, Dahle, Daly, Dodd, Beth Gaines, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gatto, Gipson, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gray, Grove, Hadley, Harper, Roger Hernández, Holden, Jones, Jones-Sawyer, Kim, Lackey, Levine, Linder, Lopez, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Nazarian, Obernolte, O'Donnell, Olsen, Patterson, Perea, Quirk, Rendon, Rodriguez, Salas, Steinorth, Mark Stone, Thurmond, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wilk, Williams, and Wood)

(Coauthor: Senator Fuller)

February 25, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 33—Relative to women veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 33, as amended, Atkins. Women veterans.

This measure would proclaim June 12, 2015, as Women Veterans' Day and urge all citizens to join in celebrating the many contributions of women to our military forces.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Women have proudly served their country
2 throughout all periods of the history of the United States, whether
3 disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and
4 Civil War, as nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots
5 in Afghanistan; and

6 WHEREAS, Women have formally been a part of the United
7 States Armed Forces since the inception of the Army Nurse Corps
8 in 1901, but have informally served since the inception of our
9 nation's military; and

10 WHEREAS, During the American Revolution, women served
11 on the battlefield alongside the men, mainly as nurses, water
12 bearers, often called "Molly Pitchers," cooks, laundresses, and
13 saboteurs, and despite Army regulations that only men could enlist,
14 women who wanted to join in the fighting circumvented the rules
15 by masquerading as young men or boys; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1917, the Navy announced it would open
17 enlistment to women and about 12,000 female yeomen entered the
18 Navy and filled a variety of jobs, including draftsmen, interpreters,
19 couriers, and translators; and

20 WHEREAS, Three hundred seven women enlisted in the Marine
21 Corps during World War I. Like their sisters in the Navy, they
22 were limited to the enlisted ranks and worked mainly in
23 Washington, D.C., doing various administrative jobs. Women's
24 service contributions in World War I showed that they either had,
25 or could quickly learn, nontraditional skills needed by the military;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, Following Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized new
28 women's components for each of the services and increased the
29 number of active duty positions in the Army and Navy Nurse
30 Corps. In May 1942, the Army was given the authority to establish
31 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, also known as the WAACs.
32 The Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps followed suit, but rather
33 than making women an auxiliary component, they opted to enroll
34 them in the reserves on the same basis as their male counterparts,
35 while the Army Air Forces enlisted nearly 1,100 female civilian
36 volunteers who earned their silver wings as Women Airforce
37 Service Pilots (WASP);and

38 WHEREAS, At the end of World War II in 1945, of the
39 approximately 12 million people remaining in the Armed Forces,
40 about 280,000 were women; and

1 WHEREAS, With the passage of the Women’s Armed Services
2 Integration Act of 1948, women became a permanent part of the
3 United States military, but women continued to be restricted to 2
4 percent of the military population. That restriction was finally
5 lifted in 1967 with the amendment of the Women’s Armed Services
6 Integration Act, which also opened senior officer ranks to women;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The early 1990s were a historic time for women
9 in the military with over 40,000 women deploying in support of
10 the Persian Gulf War, making women service members more
11 visible in the eyes of the public. In addition, in 1992, the Defense
12 Authorization Act repealed combat exclusion laws that had
13 prevented women from flying combat aircrafts; and

14 WHEREAS, Women who have served in the United States
15 military are often referred to as “invisible veterans” because their
16 service contributions, until the 1970s, went largely unrecognized
17 by politicians, the media, academia, and the general public; and

18 WHEREAS, Even though women have been officially serving
19 in the military since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901,
20 they have not always been considered qualified for veteran status
21 for the purpose of receiving benefits from the Department of
22 Veterans Affairs. Even after women were granted veteran status,
23 issues of access, exclusion, and improper management of their
24 health care still remained; and

25 WHEREAS, It was not until well after World War II that women
26 who served in the military began to officially be recognized as
27 veterans; and

28 WHEREAS, In the late 1970s and early 1980s, many of the
29 contributions made by women in World War II were formally
30 recognized through laws that granted these women with veteran
31 status for their time in service. This opened the doors for women
32 to take advantage of programs, opportunities, and benefits from
33 the federal and state governments, the Department of Veterans
34 Affairs, and other veteran service organizations; and

35 WHEREAS, The 1980 decennial census marked the first time
36 that information on women veterans was ever captured in a large
37 national survey. At the time of the 1980 decennial census, women
38 made up just over 2 percent of the veteran population. Today, that
39 proportion has increased to almost 8 percent; and

1 WHEREAS, Over the past 20 years, the Veterans Health
2 Administration (VHA) has introduced initiatives designed to
3 improve health care access and quality of care for women veterans;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, In 2008, VHA's Women Veterans Health Strategic
6 Health Care Group began a five-year plan to redesign the nation's
7 health care delivery system for women. A fundamental component
8 of this plan was to ensure that all women veterans had access to
9 comprehensive primary care from skilled women's health
10 providers; and

11 WHEREAS, There are currently over 2 million women veterans
12 living in the United States and Puerto Rico, and of those 2 million,
13 165,962 make California their home; now, therefore, be it

14 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
15 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby proclaims June
16 12, 2015, as Women Veterans' Day, and urges all citizens to join
17 in celebrating the many contributions of women to our military
18 forces; and be it further

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