

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 70

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 81

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 70—Relative to Portuguese National Heritage Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 26, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 70, Salas. Portuguese National Heritage Month.

This bill would recognize the month of June 2015 as Portuguese National Heritage Month.

WHEREAS, In September of 1542, Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (João Rodrigues Cabrillo) sailed a ship into San Diego Bay and became the first European to explore the land now known as California. Cabrillo explored the California coast, and is credited with numerous coastal discoveries; and

WHEREAS, The first Portuguese settlers came to California from the Azores Islands in the early 19th century. The largest wave of Azorean immigrants moved to California just before and after the turn of the 20th century. Each wave contributed substantially to setting up agricultural operations, especially dairy, vegetable, and fruit farms; and

WHEREAS, Throughout most of the 20th century, as many as one-half of all Portuguese Californians owned or operated a dairy farm, worked on a dairy farm, or worked in a dairy-related industry. Applying the Portuguese belief in hard work and thriftiness, along with additional labor from family members, a Portuguese settler could earn enough to reinvest in his business, and buy more land and cattle; and

WHEREAS, Historically, California has been a popular destination for immigrants from the Azores Islands, creating strong cultural ties between the two regions; currently there are over 330,000 persons of Portuguese heritage living in California, approximately 90 percent of whom have either come directly from the Azores Islands or are of Azorean parentage; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, the University of California, Berkeley, established The Portuguese Studies Program. Included among the many goals of the program is the goal “to spotlight the crucial and complex but often overlooked experience and contributions of the Portuguese American community”; and

WHEREAS, Among the great Portuguese Americans who have contributed significantly to this country are: composer John Philip Sousa, best known for composing “Stars and Stripes Forever”; poet Emma Lazarus, best known for her sonnet about the Statue of Liberty, “The New Colossus”; architect William L. Pereira, best known for designing the Transamerica

Pyramid in San Francisco; and singer and actress Carmen Miranda. Many Portuguese Americans have also served with distinction in local, state, and federal office, and have served proudly in this country's military; and

WHEREAS, Portuguese Americans have made valuable and substantial contributions to every facet of California life including the entertainment industry, the most notable of whom are Mary Astor, Tom Hanks, Joe Perry, and James Franco; and

WHEREAS, Portuguese Americans continue to thrive in agricultural communities of the San Joaquin Valley, including Hanford and Lemoore in Kings County and Shafter, Wasco, and Bakersfield in Kern County; they have contributed greatly to making market milk the leading agricultural product by value in both Kings and Kern Counties; and

WHEREAS, The Portuguese Heritage Society of California designated the second Saturday of June as a day to celebrate Portuguese culture through music, dance, art, cooking, parades, and other festivities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby declares the month of June 2015 as Portuguese National Heritage Month; and be it further

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