

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 111

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Chiu, Cooley, Lackey, and Mark
Stone)
(Coauthor: Senator Anderson)

January 6, 2016

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 111—Relative to the Persian New Year.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 111, as introduced, Nazarian. Persian New Year.

This measure would recognize Nowrūz, 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
18 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature joins the Persian and other
19 communities throughout the state in celebrating March 20, 2016,
20 as the beginning of the Persian New Year and extends best wishes
21 for a peaceful and prosperous Nowrūz to all Californians; and be
22 it further

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