

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 2, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 111

Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Baker, Chang, Chávez, Chiu, Cooley, Cristina Garcia, Harper, Kim, Lackey, and Mark Stone)

(Coauthor: Senator Anderson)

(Coauthors: Senators Allen, Anderson, Bates, Block, Hall, Hertzberg, Huff, Leno, Vidak, and Wieckowski)

January 6, 2016

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 111, as amended, 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

1 founded by Zoroaster himself, although there is no clear date of
2 its origin. Celebrating the Vernal equinox may also have been an
3 old Babylonian tradition known before 2340 B.C.; and

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, According to figures from the 2000 United States
27 Census, over one-half of all Iranian immigrants in the United States
28 lived in the State of California. In 2000, that figure was 55.9
29 percent or 158,613 residents. The states with the next largest
30 Iranian immigrant populations were New York, with 17,323
31 residents or 6.1 percent of the population, Texas, with 15,581
32 residents or 5.5 percent of the population, Virginia, with 10,889
33 residents or 3.8 percent of the population, and Maryland, with
34 9,733 residents or 3.4 percent of the population; and

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

1 WHEREAS, The Iranian population in California has grown to
2 over 200,000 residents according to the 2010 United States Census.
3 However, Iranian organizations and the Iranian—Community
4 ~~believes~~ community believe the correct number may be four times
5 that amount; and

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

10 WHEREAS, Iranian Americans have founded and served in
11 senior leadership positions of many major American companies;
12 and

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

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

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