

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 127

Introduced by Assembly Member Baker

January 28, 2016

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 127—Relative to Abraham Lincoln’s birthday.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 127, as introduced, Baker. Abraham Lincoln’s birthday.

This measure would declare that President Abraham Lincoln be honored on February 12, 2016, the anniversary of his birthday.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln the 16th President of the United
2 States, and one of our nation’s most respected and admired
3 Americans, rose from humble beginnings to become President of
4 the United States and courageously led his country during its
5 darkest time, the Civil War; and

6 WHEREAS, President Lincoln brought a profound honesty and
7 integrity to the Office of the President, and will always be
8 remembered as “Honest Abe.” Most of all, he will forever be
9 associated with saving the Union and with the abolition of slavery;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln was born on February
12 12, 1809, in Kentucky, and spent the first seven years of his life
13 there; and

14 WHEREAS, In his entire life, President Lincoln was only able
15 to attend school for a total of one year. This lack of formal
16 education only made him hungrier for more knowledge, and he

1 mastered the Bible, the works of William Shakespeare, and the
2 law; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1846, he was elected to the United States
4 Congress as the only member of the Whig Party in the Illinois
5 congressional delegation, where he forthrightly articulated his
6 views against the Mexican War and his vehement opposition to
7 the extension of slavery, choosing not to run for reelection in 1848;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Soon after President Lincoln joined the Republican
10 Party, a new political party opposed to the extension of slavery,
11 in 1858 the Republicans nominated him for the United States
12 Senate. In his nomination acceptance speech, Lincoln stated: “A
13 house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government
14 cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect
15 the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall —
16 but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one
17 thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest
18 the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall
19 rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or
20 its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become lawful in all
21 the States, old as well as new — North as well as South.” He lost
22 in a close election to Stephen Douglas, the Democratic Party
23 candidate; and

24 WHEREAS, Just two years later, having won the Republican
25 party nomination for President of the United States, President
26 Lincoln won election by a small margin, defeating, among other
27 candidates, Senator Stephen Douglas; and

28 WHEREAS, Shortly after assuming office, the Civil War began.
29 As the war continued, President Lincoln expanded the objectives
30 of the war beyond saving and restoring the Union, but also to
31 freeing the slaves and abolishing the institution of slavery; and

32 WHEREAS, On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln took
33 the first major step toward the total abolition of slavery in the
34 United States by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, which
35 took effect on January 1, 1863; and

36 WHEREAS, President Lincoln enunciated the nation’s loftiest
37 ideals during its darkest moment following the bloodiest battle of
38 the Civil War. His Gettysburg Address, regarded as one of the
39 finest speeches in the English language, was delivered by him at
40 Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863, while dedicating

1 a cemetery for those killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, which took
2 place from July 1 to July 3, 1863, between the Army of the
3 Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia; and

4 WHEREAS, In his Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln
5 reaffirmed the nation’s foremost founding principles, declaring
6 the United States to be a nation “conceived in Liberty, and
7 dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal,” while
8 assuring a nation still consumed by war “that this nation, under
9 God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of
10 the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the
11 earth”; and

12 WHEREAS, To ensure that the provisions of the Emancipation
13 Proclamation could not be construed as a mere wartime measure,
14 President Lincoln insisted that enactment of a constitutional
15 amendment abolishing slavery be included in the 1864 Republican
16 Party platform; and

17 WHEREAS, Upon reelection to a second term as President in
18 1864, President Lincoln actively supported the passage in Congress
19 of what became the 13th Amendment to the United States
20 Constitution, with the copy of the joint resolution referring the
21 13th Amendment to the states for ratification, which to this day is
22 housed in the National Archives, actually bearing President
23 Lincoln’s signature, even though the President has no formal
24 constitutional role in the amendment process, and joint resolutions
25 do not go to the White House for either signature or approval; and

26 WHEREAS, President Lincoln ultimately reunified the nation
27 and brought about a successful conclusion to our nation’s bloodiest
28 war, as the Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, with the surrender
29 of General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia to
30 the Union General, Ulysses S. Grant, at Appomattox Court House;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Only five days later, on April 14, 1865, President
33 Lincoln was shot while viewing a performance of “Our American
34 Cousin” at Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C., and died the next
35 day, not living to see his dreams of the formal abolition of slavery
36 and the restoration of the Union realized; and

37 WHEREAS, President Lincoln’s accomplishments and legacy
38 as the “Great Emancipator” and “Preserver of Our Union” are
39 perhaps unsurpassed in the history of our nation, and it is
40 particularly appropriate to recognize President Lincoln, a portrait

1 of whom hangs in a place of honor in the Assembly Chambers;
2 now, therefore, be it
3 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
4 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby declares that
5 President Abraham Lincoln be honored on February 12, 2016, the
6 anniversary of his birthday, not only in recognition of his numerous
7 accomplishments and contributions to our nation, but also as the
8 virtual symbol of the American dream, whereby an ordinary person
9 from the most humble beginnings can reach the pinnacle of
10 American society to be elected President, and to serve his country
11 with honor and courage; and be it further
12 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
13 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.