

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 9, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 127**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Baker**

January 28, 2016

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 127, as amended, 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

1 education only made him hungrier for more knowledge, and he  
2 mastered the Bible, the works of William Shakespeare, and the  
3 law; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863, while dedicating  
2 a cemetery for those killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, which took  
3 place from July 1 to July 3, 1863, between the Army of the  
4 Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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