

Introduced by Senator Pan
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Bonta)

May 5, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 58—Relative to Filipino American History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 58, as introduced, Pan. Filipino American History Month.

This measure would recognize the month of October 2015 as Filipino American History Month and the 428th anniversary of the first presence of Filipinos in the continental United States.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Filipinos and Filipino Americans have been
2 contributing to California and the United States for hundreds of
3 years, ever since October 18, 1587, when the first “Luzones Indios”
4 set foot in Morro Bay, California, on board the Nuestra Señora de
5 Esperanza, a Manila-built galleon ship captained by Pedro de
6 Unamuno of Spain; and

7 WHEREAS, In the late 1700s and early 1800s, Filipinos helped
8 Father Junípero Serra establish the California mission system; and

9 WHEREAS, Since the late 1800s, Filipino communities have
10 existed in southern Louisiana, according to oral histories recorded
11 by Rhonda Richoux Fox; and

12 WHEREAS, After the Philippines was colonized, Filipinos
13 began immigrating to San Francisco, where they contributed to
14 the city both as military personnel and as service sector workers
15 such as bellhops, dishwashers, servants, and cooks; established,
16 by the 1920s, a thriving community around Kearny and Jackson

1 Streets, which became known as “Manilatown”; and settled, during
2 the post World War II era, into the Fillmore, South of Market, and
3 Excelsior districts; and

4 WHEREAS, Between 1906 and 1935, the first large wave of
5 Filipino immigration to the United States began, as Filipinos were
6 recruited to California, Alaska, and Hawaii to work in the
7 agricultural industries, canneries, and sugarcane plantations,
8 respectively; and

9 WHEREAS, The Filipino contract workers in Hawaii, or
10 “Sakadas,” became the largest group of Asians on the sugarcane
11 plantations by the 1920s; and

12 WHEREAS, At the turn of the 20th century, Filipino students,
13 or “pensionados,” farm workers, and laborers in manufacturing
14 and in the service sector began settling in Stockton and the
15 surrounding San Joaquin Delta area, where they built a community
16 that became the largest concentration of Filipinos outside of the
17 Philippines and established a thriving six-block ethnic
18 neighborhood that became known as “Little Manila”; and

19 WHEREAS, In 2000, the Stockton City Council designated this
20 area, in downtown Stockton at the intersection of Lafayette and
21 El Dorado Streets, as the “Little Manila Historical Site,” the first
22 designation of this kind in the country; and

23 WHEREAS, In the first decades of the 20th century, thousands
24 of Filipinos in California worked in agricultural fields throughout
25 the state, in cities and regions such as the Sacramento-San Joaquin
26 Delta, the central coast, Imperial Valley, Orange County, the Inland
27 Empire, Delano, Bakersfield, Coachella Valley, and the San
28 Francisco Bay area, and became a critical element in the growth
29 and political economy of the state, often enduring harsh labor
30 conditions and poor wages, but persevering and creating a strong
31 legacy of mutual support, strikes, and organization for farm labor
32 unionization; and

33 WHEREAS, In the 1920s, Filipinos in California also worked
34 as laborers in the shipyards of Vallejo, where they established a
35 Filipino American community and business center, and became
36 so successful that there were thousands of Filipinos working as
37 shipbuilders by the start of World War II; and

38 WHEREAS, During World War II, approximately 200,000
39 Filipino soldiers battled under the command of the United States

1 to preserve the liberty of our country and win back the liberty of
2 the Philippines from the Japanese occupation; and

3 WHEREAS, Thousands of these Filipino soldiers came from
4 California, served in the First and Second Filipino Infantry
5 Regiments, underwent training at Salinas and at Fort Ord,
6 California, and were stationed at Camp Beale near Sacramento
7 and Camp Cooke near Santa Maria; and

8 WHEREAS, After World War II ended, many Filipinos who
9 had served in the United States Navy settled in National City and
10 elsewhere in the County of San Diego, as well as in the Cities of
11 West Long Beach and Wilmington, where they worked in the Long
12 Beach shipyards and Terminal Island canneries, served in the
13 harbor area as nurses and medical workers, and created flourishing
14 Filipino American communities numbering in the tens of
15 thousands; and

16 WHEREAS, Between 1941 and 1959, the second wave of
17 Filipino immigration to the United States began, as nurses, students,
18 “war brides” and fiancées of World War II military personnel and
19 veterans, tourists, and Filipino members of the United States Navy
20 came to the United States; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1965, the third wave of Filipino immigration to
22 the United States began, as the passing of the Immigration and
23 Nationality Act abolished “national origins” as the basis for
24 immigration, allowing for more immigration from Asia and Latin
25 America and for much-needed Filipino medical professionals to
26 come to the United States to fill United States labor shortages; and

27 WHEREAS, On September 8, 1965, Filipino American
28 agricultural labor leaders, including Larry Itliong and Philip Vera
29 Cruz, organized more than 1,500 farm workers from the
30 Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee in the Delano Grape
31 Strike of 1965, in partnership with César Chávez, Dolores Huerta,
32 and other Mexican American labor leaders of the National Farm
33 Workers Association, sparking one of the greatest social, economic,
34 and racial justice movements in the history of California and the
35 United States, and led to the establishment of the United Farm
36 Workers of America; and

37 WHEREAS, These agricultural workers, along with other
38 volunteers, also built Agbayani Village, a retirement facility for
39 elderly Filipino farmworkers, or “Manongs,” located at Forty Acres
40 in Delano in the County of Kern; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1968, Filipino student organizers were
2 instrumental in the leadership of the Third World Liberation Front
3 that led to the founding of our nation’s first Third World College
4 at the University of California, Berkeley, and the first College of
5 Ethnic Studies, at California State University, San Francisco, that
6 was part of the larger effort to democratize higher education for
7 all; and

8 WHEREAS, From 1968 to 1977, Filipino American activists
9 and residents of San Francisco’s International Hotel organized a
10 popular, multiracial campaign that challenged local authorities and
11 private development to place people and the public good ahead of
12 profit, and support affordable housing for Filipino and Chinese
13 immigrants and community members; and

14 WHEREAS, From 1972 to 1986, Filipino American activists
15 organized massive educational and political campaigns to restore
16 civil liberties in the Philippines during the period of martial law
17 in that country, creating dynamic local responses to international
18 politics and placing pressure on the United States government to
19 end its support of the Marcos dictatorship; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1973, the fourth wave of Filipino immigration
21 to the United States began, as political exiles and refugees from
22 the Marcos era, intellectuals, tourists, students, student activists,
23 professionals, semiprofessionals, and families came to the United
24 States; and

25 WHEREAS, In 2002, the City of Los Angeles, home to over
26 120,000 Filipinos, designated part of the city as the “Historic
27 Filipinotown” district, the largest designation of this kind in the
28 country; and

29 WHEREAS, The Filipino Community Center of the Los Angeles
30 Harbor area in the City of Wilmington continues to serve as a
31 model organization, facilitating community events such as
32 weddings, baptisms, pageants, and fiestas; and

33 WHEREAS, On November 8, 2013, Super Typhoon
34 Haiyan/Yolanda, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in
35 human history, struck the Philippines and devastated the lives of
36 millions of people throughout the Philippines and the world; and

37 WHEREAS, Today, numerous other community-based
38 institutions that take responsibility for the services, advocacy, and
39 civic engagement needs of the Filipino American community exist
40 throughout the state; and

1 WHEREAS, The Filipino American population is currently the
2 largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in California
3 and the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group
4 in the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, Nine Filipino Americans have received the
6 Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in
7 action against an enemy force that can be bestowed upon an
8 individual serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

9 WHEREAS, Filipino Americans have served the public in a
10 wide range of capacities, including, but not limited to, Chief Justice
11 of the California Supreme Court, representatives to the United
12 States Congress, legislators in the state legislatures of California
13 and other states, and other city, state, and federal leaders of the
14 United States; and

15 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the United States,
16 Filipino Americans have made cultural, economic, political, social,
17 and other contributions to our country that have become a vital
18 part of the rich, diverse, and vibrant tapestry of our nation; and

19 WHEREAS, Since World War II, federal, state, and local
20 redevelopment projects, freeway and highway construction, urban
21 decay, private development, demographic shifts, and poor city
22 planning have destroyed a significant number of Filipino American
23 historic sites and ethnic neighborhoods, and many of the remaining
24 Filipino American communities and historic sites are in danger of
25 being lost; and

26 WHEREAS, Preserving our Filipino communities throughout
27 California and the United States is critical to the preservation of
28 Filipino culture, history, traditions, and heritage and to the
29 preservation of our state and national history as well as our state
30 and national future; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
32 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the month of
33 October 2015 as Filipino American History Month and the 428th
34 anniversary of the first presence of Filipinos in the continental
35 United States; and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
37 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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