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**Introduced by Senator McGuire**

July 13, 2015

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 82—Relative to California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 82, as introduced, McGuire. California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of November 2015 as California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Runaway and homeless youth are young people  
2 between 12 and 24 years of age who have the least access to  
3 essential opportunities and supports; and  
4 WHEREAS, The prevalence of runaways and homelessness  
5 among youth is staggering, with studies suggesting that nationally  
6 between 1.6 million and 2.8 million youth up to 24 years of age  
7 experience homelessness every year, of which an  
8 overrepresentation is, compared to the general youth population,  
9 gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender; and  
10 WHEREAS, Based on national surveys and California's youth  
11 population, an estimated 200,000 youth under 18 years of age, and  
12 thousands more who are 18 to 24 years of age, are homeless for  
13 one or more days each year; and  
14 WHEREAS, Based on the latest McKinney-Vento report from  
15 the California Department of Education, 297,617 youth in  
16 California, including unaccompanied youth and youth with their  
17 families who lack stable housing, from kindergarten through grade

1 12 experienced homelessness at least one day out of the year during  
2 the 2013–2014 school year, a 10 percent increase over the previous  
3 academic year, and an 18 percent increase over the previous two  
4 years; and

5 WHEREAS, Runaway and homeless youth flee conflict, abuse,  
6 neglect, or, increasingly, poverty in their homes. They have become  
7 disconnected from educational systems and the workforce, and do  
8 not have the skills and financial resources to live on their own.  
9 The factors impacting youth homelessness are complex and differ  
10 from those impacting other homeless populations; and

11 WHEREAS, Runaway and homeless youth who live on the  
12 street are victims of physical abuse, sexual exploitation, and crime  
13 in untold numbers. An estimated 300,000 youth are either victims,  
14 or at risk of becoming victims, of the commercial sexual  
15 exploitation of children each year, of which 60 percent of these  
16 victimized children are homeless; and

17 WHEREAS, These youths are on the street because they feel  
18 there are no other options open to them; and

19 WHEREAS, The percentage of unaccompanied homeless minors  
20 who are unsheltered in California stands at 79.2 percent, which is  
21 the second highest in the country; and

22 WHEREAS, The number of emergency shelter beds available  
23 to homeless youth has dropped from 587 beds in 1990 to 555 beds  
24 in 2010, as of the last comprehensive survey; and

25 WHEREAS, Youths who “age out” of the foster care system  
26 are at an increased risk of homelessness, and represent an estimated  
27 20 percent of the 20,000 youth who leave foster care and are  
28 currently homeless; and

29 WHEREAS, Providing safe, stable, and permanent housing for  
30 runaway and homeless youth is a family, community, state, and  
31 national priority; and

32 WHEREAS, The future well-being of our state depends on the  
33 value we place on our youth, and, in particular, on our actions to  
34 provide the most vulnerable young people in the state with  
35 opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities they  
36 need to find and maintain stable housing and develop into healthy  
37 and productive adults; and

38 WHEREAS, The number of effective programs providing  
39 services and support to runaway and homeless youth in California  
40 is a fraction of what is needed to fully address the needs of these

1 young people as only 20 out of California's 58 counties have  
2 programs for runaway and homeless youth; and

3 WHEREAS, The California Coalition for Youth has operated  
4 the California Youth Crisis Line (1-800-843-5200), 24 hours a  
5 day, seven days a week, for over 27 years as the state's only  
6 emergency response system for youth in crisis; and

7 WHEREAS, November is National Runaway and Homeless  
8 Youth Awareness Month; and

9 WHEREAS, The California Coalition for Youth, along with  
10 other community-based organizations, providers, and advocates,  
11 is sponsoring California's fifth annual Runaway and Homeless  
12 Youth Month to increase awareness and action on behalf of youth  
13 at risk or currently living on the street; and

14 WHEREAS, Awareness of the tragedy of youth homelessness  
15 and its causes must be heightened to ensure greater support for  
16 effective programs aimed at preventing homelessness and helping  
17 youth remain off the streets; now, therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
19 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the need for  
20 individuals, schools, communities, businesses, local governments,  
21 and the state to take action on behalf of runaway and homeless  
22 youth in California; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of  
24 November 2015 as California Runaway and Homeless Youth  
25 Month; and be it further

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