

**Introduced by Senator Pan**

January 11, 2016

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 97—Relative to Filipino American History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 97, as introduced, Pan. Filipino American History Month.

This measure would recognize the month of October 2016 as Filipino American History Month and the 429th 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  
17 Streets, which became known as “Manilatown”; and settled, during

1 the post World War II era, into the Fillmore, South of Market, and  
2 Excelsior districts; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

37 WHEREAS, During World War II, approximately 200,000  
38 Filipino soldiers battled under the command of the United States  
39 to preserve the liberty of our country and win back the liberty of  
40 the Philippines from the Japanese occupation; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 WHEREAS, In 1968, Filipino student organizers were  
40 instrumental in the leadership of the Third World Liberation Front

1 that led to the founding of our nation’s first Third World College  
2 at the University of California, Berkeley, and the first College of  
3 Ethnic Studies, at California State University, San Francisco, which  
4 was part of the larger effort to democratize higher education for  
5 all; and

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, In 2002, the City of Los Angeles, home to over  
24 120,000 Filipinos, designated part of the city as the “Historic  
25 Filipinotown” district, the largest designation of this kind in the  
26 country; and

27 WHEREAS, The Filipino Community of Los Angeles Harbor  
28 Area, Inc., in the City of Wilmington continues to serve as a model  
29 organization, facilitating community events such as weddings,  
30 baptisms, pageants, and fiestas; and

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

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

39 WHEREAS, The Filipino American population is currently the  
40 largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in California

1 and the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group  
2 in the United States; and

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

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

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

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

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

29 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
30 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the month of  
31 October 2016 as Filipino American History Month and the 429th  
32 anniversary of the first presence of Filipinos in the continental  
33 United States; and be it further

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

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