

Introduced by Senator Lara

**(Coauthors: Senators Anderson, Bates, Cannella, Hall, Hertzberg,
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(Coauthors: Assembly Members Baker, Chávez, Dodd, Maienschein,
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February 8, 2016

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 107—Relative to Cambodian
Genocide Memorial Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 107, as introduced, Lara. Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week.

This measure would recognize the week of April 11 to April 17,
2016, inclusive, as Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Cambodian people have a long and rich
2 cultural heritage symbolized by the temple city Angkor Wat,
3 considered one of the Wonders of the Ancient World, built between
4 the 9th and 12th centuries, stands as a living icon of the endurance
5 and genius of all Cambodians throughout the world; and

6 WHEREAS, Early connections between the United States and
7 Cambodia began in the 1950s, when Cambodia sent bright and
8 talented college students to universities, including California State
9 Universities in Long Beach and Los Angeles, to study technical
10 trades, engineering, and agriculture with the assistance of the
11 United States Agency for International Development (USAID);
12 and

13 WHEREAS, The relationship between the United States and
14 Cambodia had been forged through educational and professional

1 exchange, and therefore in 1975, with the impending overthrow
2 of the government by the totalitarian Khmer Rouge regime, the
3 United States accepted over 4,000 Cambodian evacuees to ensure
4 their safety; and

5 WHEREAS, April 17, 2016, will mark both the 41st anniversary
6 of the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, seizing control of Cambodia
7 and the beginning of the Cambodian Genocide; and

8 WHEREAS, Between April 17, 1975, and January 7, 1979, the
9 Khmer Rouge of Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, Secretary
10 General of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, and other members
11 of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the
12 Communist Party of Kampuchea and their agents, committed acts
13 of genocide and other crimes against humanity; and

14 WHEREAS, The genocide and other crimes against humanity
15 committed against the people of Cambodia, including various
16 religious groups and ethnic minorities, during the Khmer Rouge
17 regime led to the deaths of over 1,700,000 Cambodians, which
18 was 21 percent of the nation's population; and

19 WHEREAS, The Khmer Rouge regime also sought to eliminate
20 all aspects of Cambodian culture by systematically killing those
21 with education, separating families, and destroying institutions
22 such as Buddhist temples, schools, libraries, dance, and music;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Countless victims have since come forward to tell
25 their stories of imprisonment, starvation, slavery, rape, and
26 systematic forced marriage; and

27 WHEREAS, After the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime
28 in 1979, over 140,000 Cambodians came to the United States as
29 refugees, a group of special humanitarian and foreign policy
30 concern to the United States because of the well-founded fear of
31 persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership
32 in a particular social group, or political opinion and thus in need
33 of protection in accordance with the United Nations' 1951
34 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; and

35 WHEREAS, The State of California has the largest population
36 of Cambodians and the City of Long Beach is known around the
37 world as home to the largest Cambodian community outside of
38 Southeast Asia; and

39 WHEREAS, The Cambodian people have drawn from their
40 cultural history to rebuild their lives and communities through

1 participation in American politics on the local and national levels,
2 by establishing local and international businesses, by developing
3 new art forms and community organizations, and by raising a new
4 generation of Americans who promise to contribute to the future
5 of the State of California and the nation; and

6 WHEREAS, The Cambodian genocide was a human tragedy
7 and must be remembered for the scale of violence and devastation
8 perpetrated against the people of Cambodia, so that it does not
9 happen again, there or in any other country; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1994 the United States Congress passed the
11 Cambodian Genocide Justice Act, committing the American
12 government to the pursuit of justice for the victims of the genocide
13 and affirming the policy of the United States to bring members of
14 the Khmer Rouge to justice for their crimes against humanity; and

15 WHEREAS, The genocide and other crimes against humanity
16 did not succeed in destroying the Cambodian people or their
17 culture, in fact the culture and heritage of the Cambodian people
18 continues to this day through the accomplishments of Cambodians
19 and their descendants; and

20 WHEREAS, The suffering and loss of the Cambodian people
21 and their accomplishments and perseverance in reestablishing
22 families, communities, and enhancing the cultural and historical
23 diversity of our state and nation should be recognized and honored;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, The Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week will
26 honor the survivors and their descendants for their courage and
27 contributions to our state and country. This week will serve as a
28 way to remember those who lost their lives in Cambodia and in
29 genocides around the world; now, therefore, be it

30 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
31 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby recognizes the
32 week of April 11 to April 17, 2016, inclusive, as Cambodian
33 Genocide Memorial Week, and calls upon all Californians to
34 observe the week by participating in appropriate activities and
35 programs; 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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