

Introduced by Senator Morrell
(Coauthors: Senators Allen, Hueso, Nguyen, Nielsen, and Roth)

August 1, 2016

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 159—Relative to Purple Heart Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 159, as introduced, Morrell. Purple Heart Day.

This measure would declare August 7, 2016, as Purple Heart Day in California.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the
2 Armed Forces who are killed or wounded in action; and
3 WHEREAS, Created in 1932, the Purple Heart has a long storied
4 past that dates back to the founding fathers of the United States.
5 The award takes its design from the Badge of Military Merit, which
6 was commissioned by General George Washington on August 7,
7 1782. This award consisted of a purple, heart-shaped piece of silk
8 having a narrow edge of silver stitched with the word Merit across
9 the face and is considered to be the first official military combat
10 badge of the Armed Forces. The official successor decoration of
11 the Badge of Military Merit is the Purple Heart; and
12 WHEREAS, Originally, the award was only open to the United
13 States Army and Air Force service members and could not be
14 awarded posthumously. President Franklin D. Roosevelt changed
15 that in 1942 with an executive order that opened the award to
16 members of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast
17 Guard. Later that year, in a separate order, the award was made

1 available for posthumous award to any member of the military;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, To date, approximately two million Purple Heart
4 Medals have been awarded. The award can be awarded
5 retroactively to a soldier as far back as 1917, allowing veterans
6 from World War I to be eligible; and

7 WHEREAS, Originally, the Purple Heart was awarded for
8 meritorious service, and injury was a consideration for merit. In
9 1942, the creation of the Legion of Merit award duplicated the
10 merit requirement, which became unnecessary for the Purple Heart;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, From 1942 to 1997, civilians serving in, or
13 affiliated with, the Armed Forces were eligible to receive the Purple
14 Heart. Some of the earliest civilians to receive this honor were
15 firefighters wounded or killed while fighting fires caused by the
16 attack on Pearl Harbor; now, therefore, be it

17 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
18 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature encourages all Californians
19 to honor those who have served in the Armed Forces, especially
20 those who have been wounded and received the Purple Heart, and
21 declares August 7, 2016, as Purple Heart Day in California; and
22 be it further

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