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**Introduced by Senator McGuire**

August 1, 2016

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 160—Relative to California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 160, as introduced, McGuire. California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month.

This measure would designate the month of November 2016 as California Runaway and Homeless Youth Month and would recognize the need for individuals, schools, communities, businesses, local governments, and the state to take action on behalf of runaway and homeless youth in California.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Runaway and homeless youth are young people  
2 12 to 24 years of age, inclusive, 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 and 2.8 million youth up to 24 years of age experience  
7 homelessness every year, of which an overrepresentation, compared  
8 to the general youth population, are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or  
9 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

1 WHEREAS, Based on the latest McKinney-Vento report from  
2 the State Department of Education, 297,617 youth, including  
3 unaccompanied youth and youth with their families who lack stable  
4 housing, in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, experienced  
5 homelessness at least one day out of the year during the 2013–14  
6 school year, which is a 10 percent increase over the previous  
7 academic year and an 18 percent increase over the 2011–12  
8 academic year; and

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

15 WHEREAS, Runaway and homeless youth who live on the  
16 street are victims of physical abuse, sexual exploitation, human  
17 trafficking, and crime in untold numbers. Each year an estimated  
18 300,000 youth are either victims, or at risk of becoming victims,  
19 of commercial sexual exploitation. Of these victimized children,  
20 approximately 60 percent are homeless; and

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

23 WHEREAS, Of the unaccompanied homeless minors in  
24 California, 76.3 percent are unsheltered, which is the second  
25 highest percentage in the country. Twenty-eight percent of  
26 homeless youth in the country are located in California, and  
27 California has the largest number of homeless youth in any state;  
28 and

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

32 WHEREAS, Youths who “age out” of the foster care system  
33 are at an increased risk of homelessness and represent an estimated  
34 20 percent of the 20,000 youth who leave foster care and are  
35 currently homeless; and

36 WHEREAS, Providing safe, stable, and permanent housing for  
37 runaway and homeless youth is a family, community, state, and  
38 national priority, and homeless youth are considered a unique  
39 population in the homeless community by the United States  
40 Interagency Council on Homelessness; and

1 WHEREAS, The future well-being of our state depends on the  
2 value we place on our youth, and, in particular, on our actions to  
3 provide the most vulnerable young people in the state with  
4 opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities they  
5 need to find and maintain stable housing and develop into healthy  
6 and productive adults; and

7 WHEREAS, The number of effective programs providing  
8 services and support to runaway and homeless youth in California  
9 is a fraction of what is needed to fully address the needs of these  
10 young people, as only 20 of California's 58 counties have programs  
11 for runaway and homeless youth; and

12 WHEREAS, The California Coalition for Youth has operated  
13 the California Youth Crisis Line (1-800-843-5200), 24 hours a  
14 day, seven days a week for over 27 years as the state's only  
15 emergency response system for youth in crisis and began offering  
16 chat-to-text counseling services in 2016; and

17 WHEREAS, November is National Runaway and Homeless  
18 Youth Awareness Month; and

19 WHEREAS, The California Coalition for Youth, along with  
20 other community-based organizations, providers, and advocates,  
21 is sponsoring the sixth annual California Runaway and Homeless  
22 Youth Month to increase awareness and action on behalf of youth  
23 who are at risk or currently living on the street; and

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

28 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
29 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the need for  
30 individuals, schools, communities, businesses, local governments,  
31 and the state to take action on behalf of runaway and homeless  
32 youth in California; and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of  
34 November 2016 as California Runaway and Homeless Youth  
35 Month; 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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