

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 146

Introduced by Assembly Members Ducheny, Baca, Bustamante, Cardenas, Cedillo, Escutia, Figueroa, Gallegos, Havice, Martinez, Napolitano, Ortiz, and Villaraigosa

(Coauthors: Senators Ayala, Calderon, Polanco, and Solis)

April 29, 1998

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 146—Relative to the 25th Anniversary of the Latino Legislative Caucus.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 146, as introduced, Ducheny. Latino Legislative Caucus: 25th Anniversary.

This measure would recognize the Latino Legislative Caucus for its outstanding public service upon its 25th Anniversary and would commend the Latino Legislative Caucus for its many accomplishments since its formation in 1973.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The year 1998 marks the 25th anniversary
2 of the Latino Legislative Caucus; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1962, Phil Soto and John Moreno were
4 the first two Latinos elected to the Legislature during this
5 century; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1968, Alex Garcia was elected to the
7 Assembly and in 1970 Peter Chacon was also elected to
8 the Assembly; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1972, three more Latinos were elected
2 to the Assembly and in 1973, Alex Garcia, Peter Chacon,
3 Joseph Montoya, Ray Gonzales, and Richard Alatorre, the
4 five Latinos serving in the Legislature, formed the
5 Chicano Legislative Caucus, and

6 WHEREAS, The establishment of that caucus marked
7 a significant turning point in the political empowerment
8 of the Latino community because, for the first time in
9 California's legislative history, an agenda was formulated
10 and legislative priorities were developed to protect and
11 preserve the rights of Latinos throughout California; and

12 WHEREAS, Today, the Latino Caucus is composed of
13 17 members, including 4 Senators, Ruben Ayala, Charles
14 Calderon, Richard Polanco, and Hilda Solis, and 13
15 Assembly Members, Joe Baca, Cruz Bustamante, Tony
16 Cardenas, Gil Cedillo, Denise Moreno Ducheny, Martha
17 Escutia, Liz Figueroa, Martin Gallegos, Sally Morales
18 Havice, Diane Martinez, Grace Napolitano, Deborah
19 Ortiz, and Antonio Villaraigosa; and

20 WHEREAS, The Caucus is one of the most influential
21 organizations within the Legislature and members of the
22 Caucus serve in strategic leadership positions that seek to
23 improve the quality of life for working families in
24 California as the issues affecting Latinos in California are
25 issues that affect all Californians; and

26 WHEREAS, In the 1970s, when the Caucus was chaired
27 by Assembly Member Alatorre, it addressed many policy
28 issues affecting Latinos and all Californians; and

29 WHEREAS, During this time, the Caucus held weekly
30 meetings, when the Legislature was in session, to discuss
31 important policy issues, including issues affecting
32 farmworkers which resulted in the enactment of the
33 Agricultural Labor Relations Act that increased
34 protections for California's farmworkers, the passage of
35 the Bilingual Education Act in 1973 that provided for
36 equal education for English learners in California's
37 schools, and the enactment of legislation that increased
38 the availability and accessibility of affordable housing for
39 working families; and



1 WHEREAS, The Caucus also focused on legislation
2 implementing outreach programs that diversified
3 enrollment at public colleges and universities in
4 California and employment within the state government
5 workforce; and

6 WHEREAS, Assembly Member Alatorre's leadership
7 in formulating the 1980 reapportionment plan laid the
8 groundwork to ensure that seats in the Legislature were
9 drawn to increase Latino representation, and the election
10 of Gloria Molina to the Assembly in 1982 marked the
11 election of the first Latina to the Legislature, and

12 WHEREAS, During Assembly Member Chacon's
13 service as Chair of the Caucus from 1978 to 1991, the
14 Caucus held regional meetings in various locations across
15 California to discuss issues concerning Latino
16 communities, printed a newsletter, and worked very
17 closely during these years with the Legislative Black
18 Caucus to address issues of concern to all working class
19 families in California, and

20 WHEREAS, In 1991, the Chicano Legislative Caucus
21 was renamed the Latino Legislative Caucus and
22 Assembly Member Richard Polanco was elected the new
23 Chair of the Caucus; and

24 WHEREAS, In the 1992 elections, the Assembly gained
25 three additional Latino seats, expanding the Caucus
26 membership to 10, and

27 WHEREAS, Four more Latinos were elected to the
28 Legislature in 1994, bringing membership in the Caucus
29 to 14, and Hilda Solis was elected as the first Latina in the
30 Senate; and

31 WHEREAS, The 1996 elections brought four more new
32 Latinos to the Legislature and Latinos began serving in
33 significant and historical leadership positions in both the
34 Assembly and the Senate; and

35 WHEREAS, In the Senate, Charles Calderon became
36 the first Latino Senate Majority Floor Leader and in the
37 Assembly, Cruz Bustamante became the first Latino
38 Speaker, Antonio Villaraigosa became the first Latino
39 Majority Leader, Denise Moreno Ducheny became the
40 first Latino to Chair the Assembly Budget Committee



1 and the Budget Conference Committee, Martha Escutia
2 became the first Latino legislator to Chair the Assembly
3 Judiciary Committee, and Joe Baca, the first Latino to
4 serve as Speaker pro Tempore in 1995, was selected to
5 serve as Assistant Speaker pro Tempore; and

6 WHEREAS, In the 1997 portion of the 1997–98 Regular
7 Session, Speaker Cruz Bustamante negotiated the
8 adoption of the first ever state-only food stamp program
9 for individuals losing federal eligibility based on
10 immigration status and during the same time, Majority
11 Leader Antonio Villaraigosa, who was subsequently
12 elected as the second Latino Speaker in 1998, worked on
13 legislation restoring eligibility for Medi-Cal, pre-natal
14 care, in-home supportive services, and Supplemental
15 Security Income for the permanent resident community;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, In 1997, Caucus members were
18 responsible for enactment of legislation for the first
19 ever-healthcare program, Healthy Families, for the
20 children of California’s working poor, and for enactment
21 of legislation ensuring an eight-hour workday for all
22 Californians; and

23 WHEREAS, The strong support of the Latino
24 Legislative Caucus ensured the adoption of funding for
25 farmworker housing for the first time in five years,
26 secured funding for childcare for agricultural workers,
27 resulted in establishment of a food voucher program for
28 farmworkers, and gained allocation of funding for
29 pesticide use enforcement; and

30 WHEREAS, In 1998, Members of the Latino Caucus in
31 both houses assumed leadership positions, with Assembly
32 Member Antonio Villaraigosa being elected Speaker of
33 the Assembly and Senator Polanco, the Chair of the
34 Latino Caucus, being elected Majority Leader of the
35 Senate, thus being the second Latinos in history to hold
36 these influential and powerful positions; and

37 WHEREAS, The issues confronting the Latino
38 Legislative Caucus today continue to be similar to those
39 it has struggled with for the past 25 years, including
40 provision of affordable housing, ensuring that education



1 is affordable and accessible, creating good paying jobs for
2 all working California families, and improving the overall
3 quality of life for all Latinos and all other Californians;
4 now therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the*
6 *Senate thereof concurring,* That the Legislature
7 recognizes the Latino Legislative Caucus for its
8 outstanding public service upon its 25th Anniversary and
9 commends the Latino Legislative Caucus for its many
10 accomplishments since its formation in 1973.

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