

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 146

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 105

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

[Filed with Secretary of State July 27, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 146, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, In the Senate, Charles Calderon became the first Latino Senate Majority Floor Leader and in the Assembly, Cruz Bustamante became the first Latino Speaker, Antonio Villaraigosa became the first Latino Majority Leader, Denise Moreno Ducheny became the first Latino to Chair the Assembly Budget Committee and the Budget Conference Committee, Martha Escutia became the first Latino legislator to Chair the Assembly Judiciary Committee, and Joe Baca, the first Latino to serve as Speaker pro Tempore in 1995, was selected to serve as Assistant Speaker pro Tempore; and

WHEREAS, In the 1997 portion of the 1997-98 Regular Session, Speaker Cruz Bustamante negotiated the adoption of the first ever



state-only food stamp program for individuals losing federal eligibility based on immigration status and during the same time, Majority Leader Antonio Villaraigosa, who was subsequently elected as the second Latino Speaker in 1998, worked on legislation restoring eligibility for Medi-Cal, pre-natal care, in-home supportive services, and Supplemental Security Income for the permanent resident community; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The issues confronting the Latino Legislative Caucus today continue to be similar to those it has struggled with for the past 25 years, including provision of affordable housing, ensuring that education is affordable and accessible, creating good paying jobs for all working California families, and improving the overall quality of life for all Latinos and all other Californians; now therefore, be it

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

