

## Senate Joint Resolution No. 4

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 64

Senate Joint Resolution No. 4—Relative to Human Rights.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 16, 1999.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 4, Solis. Afghan women's rights.

This measure would request the President of the United States and Congress to take necessary action to ensure the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan are not systematically violated, as specified.

WHEREAS, The legacy of war in Afghanistan has had a devastating impact on the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, The warring factions in Afghanistan have routinely violated the rights of women and girls; and

WHEREAS, There has been a marked increase in human rights violations against women and girls since the Taliban militia seized the City of Kabul in September 1996; and

WHEREAS, Afghan women are now forbidden to work outside of the home. Prior to the Taliban takeover, women worked outside of the home in various professions; and

WHEREAS, Seventy percent of school teachers, 50 percent of civilian government workers, and 40 percent of doctors in Kabul were women; and

WHEREAS, Afghan girls and women are prohibited from attending schools and universities. Before the takeover, 50 percent of the students in Afghanistan were women; and

WHEREAS, Afghan women are forbidden from appearing outside the home unless accompanied by a close male relative; and

WHEREAS, Access to health care has been denied to the majority of Afghan women and girls. This is a result of prohibiting male doctors from examining women, prohibiting women doctors from practicing, and limiting the health facilities available to women; and

WHEREAS, Afghan women are required to be covered from head to toe in a shroud, with only a narrow mesh opening through which to see, when they leave their homes. Likewise, they are not allowed to wear shoes that make any noise when they walk; and

WHEREAS, Homes and other buildings in which Afghan women or girls might be present must have their windows painted so no female can be seen from outside; and

WHEREAS, Afghan women have been whipped, beaten, shot at, and, at times, killed for not adhering to these restrictions; and



WHEREAS, The Secretary of State of the United States, the United Nations, and the Physicians for Human Rights have reported that the Taliban's targeting of women and girls for discrimination and abuse has created a health and humanitarian disaster; and

WHEREAS, The International Red Cross and the United Nations estimate that more than 500,000 people in the City of Kabul, approximately two-thirds of the residents of that city, depend on international aid to survive; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan recognizes international human rights conventions such as the Covenant on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, all of which espouse respect for basic human rights of all individuals without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, or gender; and

WHEREAS, Denying women and girls the right to education, employment, access to adequate health care, and direct access to humanitarian aid runs counter to international human rights conventions; and

WHEREAS, Peace and security in Afghanistan can only be realized with the full restoration of all human rights and fundamental freedom, the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their homeland in safety and dignity, and the reconstruction of Afghanistan; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California urges the President of the United States and Congress to take the necessary action to ensure the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan are not systematically violated, and urges a peaceful resolution to the situation in Afghanistan that restores the human rights of Afghan women and girls; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Secretary of State of the United States, to the President of the United States, and to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

