

## Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 76

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 131

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 76—Relative to Elias Cortez and the Department of Information Technology staff.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 12, 2000.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 76, Vasconcellos. Elias Cortez and the Department of Information Technology staff.

This measure would commend, congratulate, and express gratitude to Elias Cortez, the Director of Information and Technology, and his staff for his and their profound, critical, and lasting contribution to the continued well-being of our state and our citizens. The measure would encourage Mr. Cortez to direct his talents, wisdom, knowledge, collaborative nature, and dedicated staff toward the challenges that the state and the people of California face as the state ventures further into the age of information technology.

WHEREAS, In the 1960's, computer programmers decided to program computers so that they recognized the year in a date field with only the last two digits, and computers were programmed to assume that the first two digits in a date field would be "19"; and

WHEREAS, The world's computers faced the potential for critical, and in some cases life-threatening, errors and full-scale breakdown when computers turned over to the first day of the year 2000 if they did not recognize the new first two digits "20"; and

WHEREAS, This phenomenon came to be known as the "Y2K Bug" whose recognition and resolution became a major cause for concern for all of us; and

WHEREAS, The possible ramifications of the Y2K Bug included widespread and profound breakdown and chaos, including the loss of life-essential services and many other less threatening yet serious failures such as interrupted telephone and electrical services, inaccurate bank transactions, inoperable hospital equipment, failed delivery of food and medicine, unsafe elevators, and delayed service from government entities; and

WHEREAS, The State of California was obligated to play a leading role to ensure that all of our public and private computer systems would not be impacted and rendered inoperable by the Y2K Bug; and

WHEREAS, The State of California initiated its Y2K remediation program in 1997 to modify every date field to four digits to indicate the year, and assigned responsibility to the Department of

Information Technology (DOIT) for accomplishing this in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature, through a joint oversight committee, began monitoring and helping to guide our state's comprehensive Y2K public and private remediation efforts, beginning in May 1997; and

WHEREAS, When Governor Gray Davis was inaugurated in January 1999, he embraced Y2K remediation as one of his first and most urgent priorities; and

WHEREAS, One of Governor Davis' earliest appointees was Elias Cortez as Director of the Department of Information Technology and chief information officer for the state, making him the person directly responsible for assuring our full and timely compliance with all action necessary to thwart the threat of the Y2K Bug; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cortez moved immediately, smartly, and comprehensively to engage himself and his department and the entirety of our state government in the Y2K remediation effort with all necessary diligence and urgency and imbued each and all of his colleagues with the same commitment to diligent and urgent remediation of the Y2K Bug; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cortez, in collaboration with other technology experts, promulgated an entirely new, thoroughgoing, and credible remediation action plan that effectively identified and targeted mission critical computer systems, mapped essential steps and target dates for implementation, employed a sufficient number of outside consultants to assist state agencies with mission critical systems, and engaged the regular guidance of private technology and business leaders; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cortez and his staff dedicated themselves and their time and energy almost exclusively to the task of ensuring that every step in the remediation plan was carried out in an effective and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cortez and his staff fully exercised, even asserted, all the authority given them by Governor Davis to compel state entities to meet their remediation goals with all due diligence and due haste; and

WHEREAS, Not satisfied with remediating only our state's computers, Mr. Cortez stretched his mandate to facilitate remediation for all California local governments, utilities, hospitals, and the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Due to the talent, dedication, commitment, and thoroughgoing smart hard work of Mr. Cortez, his staff, and colleagues, our State of California avoided any noticeable impact by the Y2K Bug; and

WHEREAS, Due to smart implementation of his Y2K remediation plan, Mr. Cortez was concurrently able to improve and enhance many of our state's computer systems; now, therefore, be it



*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislature of the State of California heartily commends, congratulates, and expresses our deep and abiding gratitude to Elias Cortez, the Director of Information Technology, and his staff at the Department of Information Technology, for his and their profound, critical, and lasting contribution to the continued well-being of our state and our citizens; and be it further

*Resolved,* That Mr. Cortez, after an appropriate period of respite and rejuvenation (both needed and deserved), is heartily encouraged to direct his considerable talents, his wisdom and knowledge, his collaborative nature, and dedicated staff toward the ever mounting and increasingly complex challenges that the state and the people of California face as our state ventures further into this age of information technology; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Department of Information Technology and to the author for appropriate distribution.

