

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 27, 2009

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 2, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009–10 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 53

Introduced by Assembly Member Price

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Adams, Ammiano, Anderson, Arambula, Bass, Beall, Bill Berryhill, Tom Berryhill, Blakeslee, Block, Blumenfield, Brownley, Buchanan, Caballero, Carter, Chesbro, Conway, Cook, Coto, Davis, De La Torre, De Leon, DeVore, Duvall, Emmerson, Eng, Evans, Feuer, Fletcher, Fong, Fuentes, Fuller, Furutani, Gaines, Galgiani, Garrick, Gilmore, Hagman, Hall, Harkey, Hernandez, Hill, Huber, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones, Knight, Krekorian, Logue, Bonnie Lowenthal, Ma, Mendoza, Miller, Monning, Nava, Nestande, Niello, Nielsen, John A. Perez, V. Manuel Perez, Portantino, Ruskin, Salas, Silva, Skinner, Smyth, Solorio, Audra Strickland, Swanson, Torlakson, Torrico, Tran, Villines, and Yamada)

March 23, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 53—Relative to Autism Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 53, as amended, Price. Autism Awareness Month.

This measure would declare April 2009 as Autism Awareness Month and recognize that individuals with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are valued and important members of society. This measure would recognize the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals

with ASDs. This measure would also declare the Legislature's continued support of the work of specified organizations related to ASDs.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that
2 typically lasts throughout a person's lifetime. It is part of a group
3 of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs); and

4 WHEREAS, Autism and ASDs are neurodevelopmental
5 disorders of unknown etiology that may cause significant
6 impairments in language, communications, and social interactions,
7 abnormalities in behaviors, and other physical manifestations; and

8 WHEREAS, ASDs are abnormalities of brain development and
9 function that are typically diagnosed during the first three years
10 of life, are four times more likely to occur in males than females,
11 and impact all segments of California's population regardless of
12 race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors; and

13 WHEREAS, ASDs now impact one out of every 150 children
14 in the United States and are the fastest growing serious
15 developmental disability, making these disorders more common
16 than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined; and

17 WHEREAS, Most school districts in California have seen a
18 doubling of students with ASDs in the past five years. The number
19 of Californians with ASDs who are served by the State Department
20 of Developmental Services now exceeds 35,000, which is a number
21 that has more than tripled since 1998 and has increased more than
22 twelvefold since 1987; and

23 WHEREAS, Many Californians are not adequately informed
24 about ASDs and the value and importance of early identification,
25 assessment, and treatment of these disorders; and

26 WHEREAS, Individuals with ASDs and their families in
27 underserved populations face tremendous and overwhelming
28 challenges in accessing and navigating the complex programs and
29 services for these disorders; and

30 WHEREAS, Parents and family members have made invaluable
31 contributions through their commitment, caring, and advocacy to
32 important advances in research, education, and treatment for
33 individuals with ASDs; and

34 WHEREAS, California has been the established leader in
35 providing services and supports for the early identification,
36 assessment, intervention, education, and treatment of individuals

1 with ASDs that began with the passage of landmark state legislation
2 such as the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act
3 of 1969 and Assembly Bill 3854 (1974, Burton), relating to autism
4 and public education; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2005, Senator Perata authored Senate Concurrent
6 Resolution 51 (Resolution Chapter 124 of the Statutes of 2005)
7 that established, with the support of Assembly Speaker Núñez and
8 bipartisan backing, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on
9 Autism, which is comprised of, among others, Senator Darrell
10 Steinberg as chairperson, and Dr. Barbara Firestone, President and
11 CEO of The Help Group, as vice chairperson, to identify gaps in
12 programs and services related to the education and treatment of
13 children, adolescents, transitional youth, and adults with ASDs,
14 and to provide recommendations that will contribute to the
15 development of a comprehensive and integrated continuum of
16 programs, services, and funding; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2006, Assembly Member Pavley authored
18 Assembly Bill 2513 (Chapter 783 of the Statutes of 2006), which
19 was sponsored and supported by the California School Boards
20 Association, California Association of Suburban School Districts,
21 and the Association of California School Administrators, directed
22 by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish the
23 Superintendent’s Autism Advisory Committee (SAAC), and
24 required this multidisciplinary advisory group to develop
25 recommendations by which public and nonpublic schools, including
26 charter schools, can better serve pupils with autism and their
27 parents; and

28 WHEREAS, The Budget Act of 2006 provided additional
29 funding that expanded the ASDs initiative to include additional
30 professional training and development, state and regional ASDs
31 resource centers, expansion of ASDs support staff, and the
32 development, publication, and dissemination of “ASD: Best
33 Practice Guidelines for Treatment and Interventions”; and

34 WHEREAS, In 2007, Senator Steinberg authored Senate
35 Concurrent Resolution 42 (Resolution Chapter 50 of the Statutes
36 of 2007) which proclaimed April 2007 as Autism Awareness
37 Month, and acknowledged the contributions made in the area of
38 early autism and ASDs intervention treatment; and

39 WHEREAS, The State Department of Developmental Services,
40 the regional centers for individuals with developmental disabilities,

1 the State Department of Education and local school districts, the
2 State Department of Health Care Services, and the Centers for
3 Autism Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology
4 (CADDRE) Network are committed to improving the quality of
5 life for individuals with ASDs; and

6 WHEREAS, The University of California, Davis M.I.N.D.
7 Institute, launched in 1998 with inspiration from the parent
8 community and with funding from the California State Legislature,
9 is now recognized internationally as a premier research institution
10 that is advancing our knowledge of ASDs and other
11 neurodevelopmental disorders; and

12 WHEREAS, First 5 California has made the issue of autism for
13 children who are five years of age and younger an important
14 priority, including the First 5 California Special Needs Project,
15 which indicates that 19 percent of children suffer from
16 developmental delays or disabilities that are frequently undetected
17 by routine examinations during the first five years of life; and

18 WHEREAS, The Help Group, the Autism Society of America,
19 Autism Speaks, Families for Early Autism Treatment (FEAT),
20 Disability Rights California, and other nonprofit organizations
21 contribute to the well-being of individuals with autism and their
22 families; and

23 WHEREAS, The University of California, Los Angeles is
24 recognized as a Center of Excellence in autism by the National
25 Institutes of Health and has made significant contributions to the
26 field; and

27 WHEREAS, The Special Needs Network, Inc. (SNN) is a
28 community-based organization founded to respond to the needs
29 of low-income and poor families struggling with raising a child
30 or adult with developmental disabilities, particularly as it relates
31 to autism; and

32 WHEREAS, SNN will celebrate World Autism Awareness Day
33 (WAAD) on April 2, 2009, and Autism Awareness Month in April
34 2009; and

35 WHEREAS, WAAD shines a bright light on autism as a growing
36 global health crisis. WAAD activities help to increase and develop
37 world knowledge of the autism epidemic and impart information
38 regarding the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention;
39 and

1 WHEREAS, Current scientific research demonstrates that the
2 early identification and intervention of children with ASDs can
3 result in significant positive outcomes in many children with ASDs;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Public information and awareness efforts are of
6 paramount importance in accelerating early identification efforts
7 and the proliferation of early intervention programs and services;
8 now, therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
10 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature affirms its commitment
11 to the important issues described in this resolution by declaring
12 April 2009 as Autism Awareness Month in California and
13 emphasizes that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued
14 and important member of our society; and be it further

15 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the
16 parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice
17 and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals
18 with ASDs; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Legislature continues to support the important
20 work of the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism, the
21 Superintendent's Autism Advisory Committee, The Help Group,
22 the University of California, Davis M.I.N.D. Institute, First 5
23 California, Families for Early Autism Treatment (FEAT), Disability
24 Rights California, the Autism Society of America, Autism Speaks,
25 the State Department of Health Care Services, Centers for Autism
26 Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology
27 (CADDRE) Network, the State Council on Developmental
28 Disabilities, the Special Needs Network, and others; and be it
29 further

30 *Resolved*, That the Legislature stresses the need to identify
31 children with ASDs and to begin early intervention services
32 immediately after a child has been diagnosed with autism, and that
33 those services, interventions, and supports for individuals with
34 ASDs and their families must be provided in an integrated,
35 seamless, comprehensive, individually focused, and culturally
36 competent manner that are delivered for the duration of the
37 individual's lifespan; and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
- 2 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.