

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 18, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

## Assembly Concurrent Resolution

**No. 123**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Chesbro**

February 12, 2010

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 123—Relative to the California Memorial Project Remembrance Day.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 123, as amended, Chesbro. California Memorial Project Remembrance Day.

This measure would proclaim the 3rd Monday of each September as California Memorial Project Remembrance Day in California, to honor and restore dignity to individuals who lived and died in California institutions.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Since 1852 when the first California state institution  
2 opened, the state has provided services to persons with disabilities  
3 in state institutions, including state hospitals and developmental  
4 centers; and  
5 WHEREAS, From the mid-1880s to the 1960s, more than 45,000  
6 individuals passed away while residents of a state institution, and  
7 information about these patients is incomplete; and  
8 WHEREAS, For the most part, the remains of the individuals  
9 who died at state institutions were placed in unmarked or numbered  
10 graves in mass sites, where numbered markers long ago  
11 disappeared and many records identifying where bodies were  
12 buried have been misplaced or destroyed; and

1 WHEREAS, Some of the state institutions involved include the  
2 following 14 institutes: Agnews Developmental Center, Atascadero  
3 State Hospital, Camarillo State Hospital, DeWitt State Hospital,  
4 Fairview Developmental Center, Lanterman Developmental Center,  
5 Mendocino State Hospital, Metropolitan State Hospital, Modesto  
6 State Hospital, Napa State Hospital, Patton State Hospital,  
7 Porterville Developmental Center, Sonoma Developmental Center,  
8 and Stockton State Hospital; and

9 WHEREAS, Gravesites of unknown individuals who have  
10 passed away while living in a state institution include, but are not  
11 limited to:

12 (a) The cremated remains of 2,284 individuals who died at the  
13 Modesto State Institution and Stockton Developmental Center at  
14 Park View in Manteca.

15 (b) The remains of many individuals who received treatment at  
16 the Metropolitan State Hospital in the early 1980s relocated to area  
17 cemeteries.

18 (c) Napa State Hospital, where from 1875 to 1924, inclusive,  
19 an estimated 4,368 individuals were buried. Napa State Hospital  
20 also interred residents at the St. Helena Public Cemetery, a local  
21 paupers field.

22 (d) Patton State Hospital, where from 1893 to 1934, inclusive,  
23 an estimated 2,024 individuals were buried.

24 (e) The remains of 1,418 individuals were buried in a cemetery  
25 now located in a field on the campus of the Sonoma Developmental  
26 Center; and

27 WHEREAS, When some state institutions closed, they sold their  
28 land and exhumed remains to county cemeteries, and the California  
29 Memorial Project has not identified all of the county cemeteries  
30 where former residents of state institutions have been interred; and

31 WHEREAS, The California Memorial Project is a collaboration  
32 of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, Disability  
33 Rights California, and People First California, that partners with  
34 the State Department of Mental Health and the Department of  
35 Developmental Services, to honor and restore dignity to individuals  
36 who lived and died in state institutions; and

37 WHEREAS, The legislation, *Senate Bill 1448 (Chapter 440 of*  
38 *the Statutes of 2002)* and *Senate Bill 258 (Chapter 391 of the*  
39 *Statutes of 2006)*, authored by Senator Wesley Chesbro ~~establishing~~  
40 *established* the partnership between the California Memorial

1 Project and the state intended to identify the location of gravesites  
2 at existing state institutions, identify the names of the patients  
3 whose remains were donated for medical research and the entity  
4 to which the remains were donated, work with the State Department  
5 of Mental Health and other state agencies to research the records  
6 of deaths and burials at cemeteries located on state institution  
7 grounds, and develop a plan for the restoration of cemeteries and  
8 gravesites of institutionalized persons; and

9 WHEREAS, The goals of the California Memorial Project  
10 include to restore cemeteries or graves where individuals from  
11 state institutions are buried, to preserve the history of the residents  
12 of state institutions, and to document the history of the client and  
13 consumer movement in California; and

14 WHEREAS, To further its mission, the California Memorial  
15 Project restores and memorializes the cemeteries at state institutions  
16 and county cemeteries, and works to place memorials at cemeteries  
17 and other sites to remember people who have died in state  
18 institutions. Two monuments have been placed so far, one erected  
19 on the California State University (CSU) Stanislaus campus, and  
20 another at the Stockton Rural Cemetery where 42 sets of remains  
21 of individuals who died in state institutions unearthed at CSU  
22 Stanislaus were reinterred. Future plans include a Napa State  
23 Hospital Memorial, a monument at the Patton State Hospital, and  
24 a boulder monument to be placed at the Ukiah Cemetery in honor  
25 of individuals who died while institutionalized at the Mendocino  
26 State Hospital; and

27 WHEREAS, Beginning in 2003 the California Memorial Project  
28 has held a Remembrance Day to remember and honor individuals  
29 who lived and died in state institutions on the third Monday of  
30 each September, the anniversary of the signing of the legislation  
31 that established the California Memorial Project partnership with  
32 the state; and

33 WHEREAS, On the September 21, 2009, Remembrance Day,  
34 over 700 community members, self-advocates, family, friends,  
35 state institution survivors, and disability advocates gathered at the  
36 Parkview Cemetery in Manteca, Napa State Hospital in Napa,  
37 Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk, Patton State Hospital in  
38 Patton, Hillcrest Cemetery in Porterville, Agnews Historic  
39 Cemetery in Santa Clara, Sonoma Developmental Center in

1 Eldridge, Stockton Rural Cemetery in Stockton, and Ukiah  
2 Cemetery in Ukiah, for Remembrance Day ceremonies; and

3 WHEREAS, In California's recent history, numerous  
4 Californians with disabilities were institutionalized and died in  
5 state facilities. Today, however, many people with disabilities live  
6 full and productive lives in the community; and

7 WHEREAS, Attention to the California Memorial Project and  
8 its work to restore cemeteries, create memorials, develop oral  
9 histories, and hold Remembrance Day ceremonies to honor those  
10 individuals are critical pieces of California's history and serve as  
11 an opportunity to reflect upon the strides made in reducing the  
12 stigma of disability, including psychiatric and developmental  
13 disability, as well as promoting community awareness and  
14 education; and

15 WHEREAS, Efforts to restore dignity to individuals whose  
16 remains are buried in gravesites on state institution lands deserve  
17 recognition and support; now, therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
19 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature of State of California  
20 hereby proclaims the third Monday of each September as California  
21 Memorial Project Remembrance Day; and be it further

22 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
23 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.