

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 43

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17—Relative to Irish American Heritage Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 2, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 17, Corbett. Irish American Heritage Month.

This measure would designate March 2009 as Irish American Heritage Month in honor of the multitude of contributions that Irish Americans have made to the country and state.

WHEREAS, Millions of Irish people, faced with severe hardship due to famine and poverty in their nation, immigrated to the United States over the last several centuries in search of a more promising future for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans initially suffered prejudice and discrimination upon first arriving in the United States. As the years went on, Irish Americans became very involved in the community and made numerous contributions in all aspects of American society and culture, especially in California; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans played vital roles in the development of the United States. Nine Irish Americans were signers of the Declaration of Independence, and 19 Presidents of the United States have been of Irish heritage, including John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton; and

WHEREAS, Many people of Irish descent have contributed to great movements that have helped to shape our country and its role in the world, including Mother Jones, labor activist; Lucy Burns, activist in the Women's Movement; and Senator George Mitchell, negotiator of the Irish Peace Accord; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have also played a major role in California politics. Many governors, legislative leaders, city mayors, and other public officials who have shaped the development of California over the years have been of Irish descent; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans were very involved in the development of infrastructure throughout the United States and especially in California. This included work on railroads and bridges that connected the West to the East. The Irish were also instrumental in the building of dams, roads, canals, and buildings that expanded greatly in the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have made their mark in pursuit of public safety and have risked or lost their lives on countless occasions in carrying out their duties; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have served with distinction in every war that this nation has fought. Many of the outstanding soldiers who fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War were of Irish descent. Since then, Irish Americans have sacrificed their lives in every other war in which the United States has fought; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have contributed greatly to the United States economy in business, including Henry Ford; Alexander Stewart, the inventor of the American department store; and Cathleen Black, president, Hearst Magazines; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the American literary tradition through great authors including Flannery O'Connor, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mary McCarthy, Tom Clancy, and Frank McCourt; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to American entertainment with such stars as actors Jack Nicholson, John Wayne, and George Clooney; actor and comedian Bill Murray; actress Grace Kelly; actress and comedian Rosie O'Donnell; actor and singer Bing Crosby; actress and singer Rosemary Clooney; and actor and director Edward Burns being of Irish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 44 million Americans claim Irish heritage, and they continue to contribute to the American and Californian political, economical, and cultural landscape; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature, in honor of the multitude of contributions that Irish Americans have made to make this a better country and state for all people, designates March 2009 to be Irish American Heritage Month in California and calls upon the people of the state to observe the month of March with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities, especially on March 17, since everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.