

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 24, 2010

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 20, 2010

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 79

Introduced by Senator Denham

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Mendoza)

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

February 22, 2010

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 79—Relative to Portuguese Heritage Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 79, as amended, Denham. Portuguese Heritage Month.

This bill would recognize the month of June as Portuguese Heritage Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, In September of 1542, Portuguese explorer João
- 2 Rodrigues Cabrillo sailed a ship into San Diego Bay and became
- 3 the first European to explore the land now known as California.

1 Cabrillo explored the California coast, and is credited with
2 numerous coastal discoveries; and

3 WHEREAS, Mathias de Sousa was the first Portuguese
4 immigrant on record, arriving in Maryland in 1634. Mr. de Sousa
5 and other early Portuguese immigrants came to the United States
6 to escape persecution because of their Jewish faith; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1870, Portuguese immigrants began arriving in
8 the United States in relatively large numbers. The majority of these
9 Portuguese immigrants were men from the Azores, who were
10 primarily recruited to work on American whaling ships and to
11 farm; and

12 WHEREAS, Many Portuguese Americans settled in the Santa
13 Clara and San Joaquin Valleys. The thriving agricultural industry
14 of the late 19th and 20th centuries virtually guaranteed a job for
15 anyone who was willing to work; and

16 WHEREAS, Between 1900 and 1940, as much as one-half of
17 the Portuguese community in California owned or operated a dairy
18 farm, worked on a dairy farm, or worked in a dairy-supporting
19 industry. Applying the Portuguese belief in hard work and
20 thriftiness, along with additional labor from family members, a
21 Portuguese settler could earn enough to reinvest in his business,
22 buying land and more dairy cows; and

23 WHEREAS, On Sundays, Portuguese Americans often
24 congregate to celebrate their native religious festivals. In particular,
25 they celebrate the Blessed Sacrament festival, the Holy Ghost
26 festival, the Santo Cristo festival, the Feast Day of Our Lady of
27 Fatima, and more recently, Dia de Portugal. These festivals provide
28 an opportunity for young children to experience the culture of their
29 ancestors who immigrated from Portugal. The festivals are famous
30 for good food, laughter, bloodless bull fights, art, and native
31 dances. In the San Joaquin and Santa Clara Valleys, large
32 gatherings and cultural events are held to celebrate Portuguese
33 American contributions to California society; and

34 WHEREAS, In 1994, the University of California, Berkeley
35 established The Portuguese Studies Program. Included among the
36 many goals of the program is the goal “to spotlight the crucial and
37 complex but often overlooked experience and contributions of the
38 Portuguese American community”; and

39 WHEREAS, Among the great Portuguese Americans who have
40 contributed significantly to this country are: composer John Philip

1 Sousa, best known for composing “Stars and Stripes Forever”;
2 poet Emma Lazarus, best known for her sonnet about the Statue
3 of Liberty, “The New Colossus”; architect William L. Pereira, best
4 known for designing the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco;
5 and singer and actress Carmen Miranda. Many Portuguese
6 Americans have also served with distinction in local, state, and
7 federal office; and

8 WHEREAS, Portuguese Americans have truly made valuable
9 and substantial contributions to every facet of California life.
10 Portuguese Americans continue to thrive in agricultural
11 communities of the Santa Clara and San Joaquin Valleys. The
12 Portuguese Heritage Society of California designated the second
13 Saturday of June as a day to celebrate Portuguese culture through
14 music, dance, art, cooking, parades, and other festivities; now,
15 therefore, be it

16 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
17 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby declares June as
18 the month of celebrating Portuguese national heritage; and be it
19 further

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