

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 18

Introduced by Assembly Member Carter

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Allen, Bradford, Campos, Cedillo, Davis, Roger Hernández, Hueso, Lara, Mitchell, Solorio, and Torres)

(Coauthors: Senators De León and Rubio)

September 1, 2011

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 18—Relative to Sickle Cell Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 18, as introduced, Carter. Sickle Cell Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize September 2011 as Sickle Cell Awareness Month in California and would urge the President and the Congress of the United States to restore funding for sickle cell anemia centers and research and to make sickle cell anemia and other genetic hemoglobinopathies a public health priority.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Sickle cell anemia and sickle cell disease, though
- 2 used interchangeably, refer to a group of inherited disorders that
- 3 affect the red blood cells; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Red blood cells with normal hemoglobin are
- 5 smooth and round, and glide easily through blood vessels. In the
- 6 bodies of people with sickle cell disease, their cells assume a
- 7 curved or “sickle” shape and become hard and sticky, blocking
- 8 blood flow and preventing oxygen from getting through tissues
- 9 and causing severe pain and damage to organs; and

1 WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 70,000 Americans have
2 sickle cell anemia. About 2.5 million Americans have the sickle
3 cell trait, meaning they carry one copy of the gene for the disease;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Sickle cell anemia occurs in 1 out of every 400
6 African American births and 1 out of every 19,000 Hispanic
7 American births. The sickle cell trait occurs in approximately 1
8 out of 12 African Americans and 1 out of 100 for Latino
9 populations; and

10 WHEREAS, The Sickle Cell Control Act was signed into law
11 in 1972 by President Richard Nixon after pledging that his
12 administration would “reverse the record of neglect on the dreaded
13 disease” and to increase funding and expand sickle cell
14 disease-related activities including the development of
15 comprehensive sickle cell centers; and

16 WHEREAS, Over 30 years later, the Sickle Cell Treatment Act
17 of 2003 was signed into law; and

18 WHEREAS, Originating in 1975, when the Sickle Cell Disease
19 Association of America and its member organizations began
20 conducting month-long events in September to call attention to
21 sickle cell disease and the need to address the problem at national
22 and local levels, chose September as National Sickle Cell
23 Awareness Month for the public to reflect on children and adults
24 whose lives, education, and careers have been affected by this
25 disease; and

26 WHEREAS, Since 2002, the Sickle Cell Disease Association
27 of America has worked with congressional champions to authorize
28 and fund a number of national sickle cell disease legislative
29 programs that provide support for patients suffering from sickle
30 cell disease, while encouraging enhanced research intended to
31 identify next-generation treatments and a cure for sickle cell
32 disease; and

33 WHEREAS, The effort to have Sickle Cell Awareness Month
34 officially recognized at all levels succeeded in 1983 when the
35 House of Representatives unanimously passed, and the President
36 signed, the first resolution introduced by the Congressional Black
37 Caucus designating September as National Sickle Cell Anemia
38 Awareness Month in 1983; now, therefore, be it

39 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
40 *California, jointly, That the Legislature of California recognizes*

1 September 2011 as Sickle Cell Awareness Month in California;
2 and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the California State Legislature urges the
4 President and the Congress of the United States to restore funding
5 for sickle cell anemia centers and research and to make sickle cell
6 anemia and other genetic hemoglobinopathies a public health
7 priority; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
9 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
10 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
11 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
12 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
13 author for appropriate distribution.