

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 161

Introduced by Assembly Member Dickinson

June 13, 2012

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 161—Relative to food literacy awareness month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 161, as introduced, Dickinson. Food literacy awareness month.

This measure would proclaim the month of September of each year as food literacy awareness month and would encourage the State Department of Health Care Services, the State Department of Public Health, and the State Department of Education to work together with local communities to engage in various activities related to food choices and education.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, “Food literacy” is defined as the understanding of
2 the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment,
3 and our community; and
4 WHEREAS, Our food choices affect our health. In California,
5 38 percent of children are overweight. If the problem of obesity
6 is not reversed, poor diet and physical inactivity will likely overtake
7 tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in America; and
8 WHEREAS, Only 14 percent of Americans eat five servings of
9 fruits and vegetables daily; and
10 WHEREAS, Residents living in low-income and underserved
11 neighborhoods without access to fresh, healthy foods, known as
12 “food deserts,” have more health problems and higher mortality

1 than residents of areas with a higher proportion of grocery stores.
2 Outcomes worsen when the food desert has high concentrations
3 of nearby fast food alternatives; and

4 WHEREAS, Food grown and consumed locally has a higher
5 nutrient value than foods transported long distances; and

6 WHEREAS, People who shop at farmers' markets come home
7 with more fruits and vegetables than people who shop at the
8 supermarket. Expansion of local food systems could ultimately
9 help reduce health care costs from obesity and other health
10 problems linked to a diet dominated by processed foods; and

11 WHEREAS, Our food choices affect the environment: food sold
12 through direct marketing channels tends to be relatively less
13 processed, which can result in significant energy savings.
14 Expansion of local and regional food systems can reduce the
15 environmental cost of United States agriculture; and

16 WHEREAS, The entire global food chain may account for
17 one-third of what's heating our planet; and

18 WHEREAS, Pesticide use in our food system has been proven
19 both harmful to the environment and to human health. Organic
20 produce contains higher levels of vitamins and nutrients than those
21 sprayed with pesticides; and

22 WHEREAS, If we all ate just one local meal a week we would
23 save 1.1 million barrels of oil annually; and

24 WHEREAS, Our food choices affect our community: as they
25 grow, local and regional food systems create jobs and raise incomes
26 in the areas they serve, keeping customers' food dollars active in
27 the local economy as farmers increase spending on inputs and
28 equipment to meet growing local demand; and

29 WHEREAS, Education is needed to inspire change. Forty-two
30 percent of parents find it easier to understand furniture assembly
31 instructions than the contents of a nutrition label; and

32 WHEREAS, When individuals are taught how to cook with
33 fresh fruits and vegetables, they are 85 percent more likely to
34 incorporate them into their diet. People who don't cook spend a
35 larger percentage of their budget on food than those who do; and

36 WHEREAS, The objective of food literacy awareness month
37 will be to promote food education, inspire food choices that are
38 good for people and good for the planet, encourage parental
39 involvement, and motivate communitywide support; now, therefore
40 be it

1 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
2 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature hereby proclaims the
3 month of September of each year as food literacy awareness month
4 in California; and be it further

5 *Resolved,* That the Legislature encourages the State Department
6 of Health Care Services, the State Department of Public Health,
7 and the State Department of Education to work together with local
8 communities to do all of the following:

9 (a) Increase awareness about the broad impacts our food choices
10 have on our health, environment, and communities.

11 (b) Educate our children about eating food that's healthy for
12 them and for the planet.

13 (c) Encourage consumption of more unprocessed foods through
14 local, California-grown whole foods and improve access to local
15 farmers' markets, farm stands, and gardens.

16 (d) Teach families how to cook healthy, budget-friendly meals
17 and snacks.

18 (e) Support change in our public food choices that promote
19 health as much as convenience.

20 (f) Improve the environmental effects of our food system by
21 encouraging composting, organics, waste reduction, and
22 sustainability; and be it further

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