

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 5, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 147**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Dickinson and Logue  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Perea)**

May 6, 2014

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 147—Relative to Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 147, as amended, Dickinson. Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

This measure would designate November as California Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month. The measure would recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions Californians of Sikh heritage have made to the state. The measure would also seek to afford all Californians the opportunity to understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1     WHEREAS, California and our nation are at once blessed and  
2     enriched by the unparalleled diversity of our residents; and  
3     WHEREAS, The Sikhs, who originated in Punjab, India, first  
4     entered California in 1899 legally through the Angel Island  
5     Immigration Station in San Francisco, California; and  
6     WHEREAS, The Sikh pioneers initially worked on railroad  
7     construction projects, and in lumber mills; and  
8     WHEREAS, By 1910, these pioneers turned to farming in the  
9     Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Imperial valleys; and

1 WHEREAS, On October 14, 1912, the first Sikh temple  
2 (Gurdwara) in the United States, the Sikh Temple Stockton, was  
3 founded by Professor Teja Singh of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan  
4 Society; and

5 WHEREAS, There are now more than 100 Gurdwaras in the  
6 United States; and

7 WHEREAS, The Stockton Record, dated November 22, 1915,  
8 quoted the Gurdwara's elected leadership declaring, "We do not  
9 permit our people to become charges on public charity. If a man  
10 is hungry and out of funds we feed him. Our dining room is open  
11 at all hours of the day and is closed only for a few hours during  
12 the night. The unfortunate hungry American will be as welcome  
13 as our own people"; and

14 WHEREAS, Legislation to authorize Sikhs to become *and other*  
15 *East Indian immigrants to naturalize as* United States citizens was  
16 not enacted until 1946; and

17 WHEREAS, On January 1, 1912, Jawala Singh and Wasakha  
18 Singh, who migrated to California through Angel Island in 1908  
19 and served as the founding Granthis of the Sikh Temple Stockton,  
20 recognized the value of education, and started six Sri Guru Govind  
21 Singh Educational Scholarships at the University of California,  
22 Berkeley; and

23 WHEREAS, These scholarships were awarded without regard  
24 to ethnicity or religion and the first awardees included three  
25 Hindus, one Christian, one Sikh, and one Muslim; and

26 WHEREAS, Board and lodging was provided at the students  
27 home at 1731 Allston Way, Berkeley, where smoking and drinking  
28 were prohibited; and

29 WHEREAS, On November 1, 1913, Ghadar, the first  
30 Punjabi-language newspaper in the United States, was published  
31 by Kartar Singh Sarabha, who was then 17 years of age, with  
32 financial support from the Stockton Gurdwara; and

33 WHEREAS, On December 31, 1913, Jawala Singh and Wasakha  
34 Singh organized the Ghadri Conclave in Sacramento to form the  
35 Ghadar Party to overthrow the British colonial rulers of the Indian  
36 subcontinent; and

37 WHEREAS, The Ghadar Party sent 616 of its members to India,  
38 of whom 86 percent were Sikhs; and

1 WHEREAS, Homage is paid to them annually at a dozen  
2 different gatherings (Melas) from Sacramento, California, to  
3 Bakersfield, California; and

4 WHEREAS, The Sikh history and culture is represented in the  
5 Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, in the Smithsonian Museum  
6 in Washington, D.C., in the Community Memorial Museum of  
7 Sutter County, and the Museum at the Sikh Temple Stockton; and

8 WHEREAS, Sikh farmers contribute abundantly towards  
9 production of peaches (Didar Singh Bains), raisins (Charanjeet  
10 Singh Bath), ~~pistachio~~ *pistachios* (Mangar family), and okra and  
11 other vegetables (Harbhajan S. Samra); and

12 WHEREAS, Sikhs have also excelled in security services (Akal  
13 Security) and transportation services, and as doctors, attorneys,  
14 engineers, teachers, and other notable capacities, and as small  
15 business owners; and

16 WHEREAS, Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh who was born in Punjab,  
17 India, and earned a Ph.D. from the University of California,  
18 Berkeley in 1924, initially worked as a foreman of cotton pickers  
19 in the Imperial Valley, and later became a farmer, played a major  
20 role in raising the funds needed to lobby for the Luce-Celler Act  
21 of 1946 that enabled him and others to naturalize as citizens, and  
22 served as an elected judge in the Westmoreland Judicial District  
23 from 1952 to 1956, before becoming the first Asian American  
24 elected to the United States Congress, wherein he served three  
25 terms from 1957 to 1963; and

26 WHEREAS, Sikh Americans have served as mayors of many  
27 California cities, including, for example David Dhillon in El  
28 Centro, Gurpal Samra in Livingston, Amarpreet “Ruby” Dhaliwal  
29 in San Joaquin, Sonny Dhaliwal in Lathrop, and Kashmir Singh  
30 Gill in Yuba City. Numerous Sikh Americans have served as  
31 council members of California cities; and

32 WHEREAS, Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh born in Punjab, India,  
33 who was a United States Veteran of World War I, who campaigned  
34 actively for the independence of India from the British Rule, and  
35 who supported Indian students and lectured on metaphysics  
36 throughout the United States, has been honored by the Fred  
37 Korematsu Institute as a “Race in the Courts Hero” for fighting  
38 his citizenship case in the United States Supreme Court in 1923;  
39 and

1 WHEREAS, Sikhs have served in all American wars since WWI;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Narinder Singh Kapany of Palo Alto, a Sikh born  
4 in Punjab, India, is an accomplished scientist and inventor, who  
5 has been awarded over 100 patents that spurred advances in lasers,  
6 biomedical instrumentation, pollution monitoring, and solar energy,  
7 and is widely acknowledged to be the father of fiber optics, a  
8 technology that has allowed for high-speed digital communication;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Yuba City, often called “Mini-Punjab” because of  
11 its 10 percent Punjabi population, commemorates the inauguration  
12 of the holy Sikh scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, on the first  
13 Sunday of November, rain or shine, and this international event  
14 has in recent years attracted up to 100,000 participants from all  
15 over the United States, Canada, and even abroad; and

16 WHEREAS, Sikh Americans throughout California celebrate  
17 the coronation of Sikh scripture and other Sikh festivals at the  
18 Gurdwaras and through parades in cities across California and the  
19 United States; and

20 WHEREAS, Various Sikh organizations, including the Sikh  
21 Council of Central California, the Sikh Coalition, the Sikh  
22 American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Sikhs United,  
23 Jakara, and individual Gurdwaras participate in interfaith meetings,  
24 seminars, conferences, meetings, and functions and share the tenets  
25 of their monotheistic religion that respects other religions and  
26 welcome all to their Gurdwaras, and try to promote mutual  
27 understanding and respect among all peoples; and

28 WHEREAS, The Sikh American community continues to make  
29 significant contributions to the California and United States  
30 economies and societies through military service, as business  
31 owners, transportation professionals, doctors, attorneys, engineers,  
32 teachers, farmers, and in a great many other notable capacities;  
33 and

34 WHEREAS, Since September 11, 2001, the Sikhs are often  
35 mistaken for terrorists of Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaida owing to  
36 the commonality of beard and the turban, and subjected to a  
37 disproportionately high rate of hate crimes, and Sikh boys suffer  
38 bullying at twice the national bullying rate for other boys; and

39 WHEREAS, The Sikh American community continues to  
40 peacefully overcome attacks on its identity and practices, whether

1 in the form of school harassment, employment discrimination, or  
2 fatal shootings, including the murders of six Sikhs during the Oak  
3 Creek Wisconsin Sikh Gurdwara shooting on August 5, 2012, as  
4 well as the senseless murders of Surinder Singh and Gurmej Atwal  
5 in Elk Grove, California, on March 4, 2011; and

6 WHEREAS, The faithful service of the Sikh American  
7 community to this state and country merits appreciation as an  
8 integral thread in the fabric of American plurality; now, therefore,  
9 be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
11 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby designates the  
12 month of November to be California's Sikh American Awareness  
13 and Appreciation Month; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes and acknowledges  
15 the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage  
16 to our state, and by adoption of this resolution, seeks to afford all  
17 Californians the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and  
18 appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans;  
19 and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
21 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution to the  
22 Members of the Legislature, members of the California Sikh  
23 American community, and other interested organizations or  
24 persons.