

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 80

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 15

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 80—Relative to Irish American Heritage Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 15, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 80, Corbett. Irish American Heritage Month.

This measure would designate March 2014 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, The journey to America from the Emerald Isle was not paved with gold. The Irish spirit of determination, perseverance, and grit prevailed against dangerous seas and deadly conditions with their hearts set on the horizon; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans initially suffered prejudice and discrimination upon first arriving in the United States. As the years went on, Irish Americans became deeply integrated in their communities and made numerous contributions in all aspects of American society and culture; 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 22 Presidents of the United States have been of Irish heritage, including John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama; 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 as governors, legislative leaders, city mayors, and other public officials, who have worked tirelessly to build California to the state that it is today; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans were significantly involved in the development of infrastructure throughout the United States, 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 as peace officers and firefighters, and have risked or lost their lives on countless occasions in carrying out their duties; and

WHEREAS, Many outstanding soldiers, never to be forgotten, who fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War were of Irish descent. Irish Americans have proudly served with distinction in every war that this nation has fought and continue to do so today; and

WHEREAS, Many Irish Americans have contributed greatly to the United States economy in business, including: Alexander Stewart, the inventor of the American department store; Cathleen Black, president of Hearst Publishing; Jack Welch, former president and chief executive officer of General Electric; and Herb Kelleher, cofounder of Southwest Airlines; Paul Adams of Facebook; John Donahoe, chief executive officer of eBay, Inc.; Conrad Burke, founder of Innovalight; and Maggie Sullivan Wilderotter, chief executive officer of Frontier Communications; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans have contributed to the field of science, including astronaut Michael Collins, first female commander of a space shuttle, Eileen Collins, physicist and Nobel Laureate Charles Townes, and bioengineer and MacArthur “Genius grant” recipient James Collins; 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; actress and singer Judy Garland; comedian Conan O’Brien; and actor and director Edward Burns, all being of Irish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 34 million Americans claim Irish heritage, and they continue to contribute to the American and California politics, economy, and culture; 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 2014 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.