

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 66

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonta
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Chang, Chau, Chiu, Chu, Kim,
Low, Ting, and Williams)
(Coauthors: Senators Liu and Pan)

May 11, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 66—Relative to Filipino American History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 66, as introduced, Bonta. Filipino American History Month.

This measure would recognize the month of October 2015 as Filipino American History Month and the 428th anniversary of the first presence of Filipinos in the continental United States.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Filipinos and Filipino Americans have been
2 contributing to California and the United States for hundreds of
3 years, ever since October 18, 1587, when the first “Luzones Indios”
4 set foot in Morro Bay, California, on board the Nuestra Señora de
5 Esperanza, a Manila-built galleon ship captained by Pedro de
6 Unamuno of Spain; and
7 WHEREAS, In the late 1700s and early 1800s, Filipinos helped
8 Father Junípero Serra establish the California mission system; and
9 WHEREAS, Since the late 1800s, Filipino communities have
10 existed in southern Louisiana, according to oral histories recorded
11 by Rhonda Richoux Fox; and

1 WHEREAS, After the Philippines was colonized, Filipinos
2 began immigrating to San Francisco, where they contributed to
3 the city both as military personnel and as service sector workers
4 such as bellhops, dishwashers, servants, and cooks; established,
5 by the 1920s, a thriving community around Kearny and Jackson
6 Streets, which became known as “Manilatown”; and settled, during
7 the post World War II era, into the Fillmore, South of Market, and
8 Excelsior districts; and

9 WHEREAS, Between 1906 and 1935, the first large wave of
10 Filipino immigration to the United States began, as Filipinos were
11 recruited to California, Alaska, and Hawaii to work in the
12 agricultural industries, canneries, and sugarcane plantations,
13 respectively; and

14 WHEREAS, The Filipino contract workers in Hawaii, or
15 “Sakadas,” became the largest group of Asians on the sugarcane
16 plantations by the 1920s; and

17 WHEREAS, At the turn of the 20th century, Filipino students,
18 or “pensionados,” farm workers, and laborers in manufacturing
19 and in the service sector began settling in Stockton and the
20 surrounding San Joaquin Delta area, where they built a community
21 that became the largest concentration of Filipinos outside of the
22 Philippines and established a thriving six-block ethnic
23 neighborhood that became known as “Little Manila”; and

24 WHEREAS, In 2000, the Stockton City Council designated this
25 area, in downtown Stockton at the intersection of Lafayette and
26 El Dorado Streets, as the “Little Manila Historical Site,” the first
27 designation of this kind in the country; and

28 WHEREAS, In the first decades of the 20th century, thousands
29 of Filipinos in California worked in agricultural fields throughout
30 the state, in cities and regions such as the Sacramento-San Joaquin
31 Delta, the central coast, Imperial Valley, Orange County, the Inland
32 Empire, Delano, Bakersfield, Coachella Valley, and the San
33 Francisco Bay area, and became a critical element in the growth
34 and political economy of the state, often enduring harsh labor
35 conditions and poor wages, but persevering and creating a strong
36 legacy of mutual support, strikes, and organization for farm labor
37 unionization; and

38 WHEREAS, In the 1920s, Filipinos in California also worked
39 as laborers in the shipyards of Vallejo, where they established a
40 Filipino American community and business center, and became

1 so successful that there were thousands of Filipinos working as
2 shipbuilders by the start of World War II; and

3 WHEREAS, During World War II, approximately 200,000
4 Filipino soldiers battled under the command of the United States
5 to preserve the liberty of our country and win back the liberty of
6 the Philippines from the Japanese occupation; and

7 WHEREAS, Thousands of these Filipino soldiers came from
8 California, served in the First and Second Filipino Infantry
9 Regiments, underwent training at Salinas and at Fort Ord,
10 California, and were stationed at Camp Beale near Sacramento
11 and Camp Cooke near Santa Maria; and

12 WHEREAS, After World War II ended, many Filipinos who
13 had served in the United States Navy settled in National City and
14 elsewhere in the County of San Diego, as well as in the Cities of
15 West Long Beach and Wilmington, where they worked in the Long
16 Beach shipyards and Terminal Island canneries, served in the
17 harbor area as nurses and medical workers, and created flourishing
18 Filipino American communities numbering in the tens of
19 thousands; and

20 WHEREAS, Between 1941 and 1959, the second wave of
21 Filipino immigration to the United States began, as nurses, students,
22 “war brides” and fiancées of World War II military personnel and
23 veterans, tourists, and Filipino members of the United States Navy
24 came to the United States; and

25 WHEREAS, In 1965, the third wave of Filipino immigration to
26 the United States began, as the passing of the Immigration and
27 Nationality Act abolished “national origins” as the basis for
28 immigration, allowing for more immigration from Asia and Latin
29 America and for much-needed Filipino medical professionals to
30 come to the United States to fill United States labor shortages; and

31 WHEREAS, On September 8, 1965, Filipino American
32 agricultural labor leaders, including Larry Itliong and Philip Vera
33 Cruz, organized more than 1,500 farm workers from the
34 Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee in the Delano Grape
35 Strike of 1965, in partnership with César Chávez, Dolores Huerta,
36 and other Mexican American labor leaders of the National Farm
37 Workers Association, sparking one of the greatest social, economic,
38 and racial justice movements in the history of California and the
39 United States, and led to the establishment of the United Farm
40 Workers of America; and

1 WHEREAS, These agricultural workers, along with other
2 volunteers, also built Agbayani Village, a retirement facility for
3 elderly Filipino farmworkers, or “Manongs,” located at Forty Acres
4 in Delano in the County of Kern; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1968, Filipino student organizers were
6 instrumental in the leadership of the Third World Liberation Front
7 that led to the founding of our nation’s first Third World College
8 at the University of California, Berkeley, and the first College of
9 Ethnic Studies, at California State University, San Francisco, that
10 was part of the larger effort to democratize higher education for
11 all; and

12 WHEREAS, From 1968 to 1977, Filipino American activists
13 and residents of San Francisco’s International Hotel organized a
14 popular, multiracial campaign that challenged local authorities and
15 private development to place people and the public good ahead of
16 profit, and support affordable housing for Filipino and Chinese
17 immigrants and community members; and

18 WHEREAS, From 1972 to 1986, Filipino American activists
19 organized massive educational and political campaigns to restore
20 civil liberties in the Philippines during the period of martial law
21 in that country, creating dynamic local responses to international
22 politics and placing pressure on the United States government to
23 end its support of the Marcos dictatorship; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1973, the fourth wave of Filipino immigration
25 to the United States began, as political exiles and refugees from
26 the Marcos era, intellectuals, tourists, students, student activists,
27 professionals, semiprofessionals, and families came to the United
28 States; and

29 WHEREAS, In 2002, the City of Los Angeles, home to over
30 120,000 Filipinos, designated part of the city as the “Historic
31 Filipinotown” district, the largest designation of this kind in the
32 country; and

33 WHEREAS, The Filipino Community Center of the Los Angeles
34 Harbor area in the City of Wilmington continues to serve as a
35 model organization, facilitating community events such as
36 weddings, baptisms, pageants, and fiestas; and

37 WHEREAS, On November 8, 2013, Super Typhoon
38 Haiyan/Yolanda, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in
39 human history, struck the Philippines and devastated the lives of
40 millions of people throughout the Philippines and the world; and

1 WHEREAS, Today, numerous other community-based
2 institutions that take responsibility for the services, advocacy, and
3 civic engagement needs of the Filipino American community exist
4 throughout the state; and

5 WHEREAS, The Filipino American population is currently the
6 largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in California
7 and the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group
8 in the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, Nine Filipino Americans have received the
10 Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in
11 action against an enemy force that can be bestowed upon an
12 individual serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

13 WHEREAS, Filipino Americans have served the public in a
14 wide range of capacities, including, but not limited to, Chief Justice
15 of the California Supreme Court, representatives to the United
16 States Congress, legislators in the state legislatures of California
17 and other states, and other city, state, and federal leaders of the
18 United States; and

19 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of the United States,
20 Filipino Americans have made cultural, economic, political, social,
21 and other contributions to our country that have become a vital
22 part of the rich, diverse, and vibrant tapestry of our nation; and

23 WHEREAS, Since World War II, federal, state, and local
24 redevelopment projects, freeway and highway construction, urban
25 decay, private development, demographic shifts, and poor city
26 planning have destroyed a significant number of Filipino American
27 historic sites and ethnic neighborhoods, and many of the remaining
28 Filipino American communities and historic sites are in danger of
29 being lost; and

30 WHEREAS, Preserving our Filipino communities throughout
31 California and the United States is critical to the preservation of
32 Filipino culture, history, traditions, and heritage and to the
33 preservation of our state and national history as well as our state
34 and national future; now, therefore, be it

35 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
36 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the month of
37 October 2015 as Filipino American History Month and the 428th
38 anniversary of the first presence of Filipinos in the continental
39 United States; and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
- 2 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.