

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 16

Introduced by Assembly Member Nation

January 27, 2003

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 16—Relative to nutrition.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 16, as introduced, Nation. Nutrition: vegetarian school lunches.

This measure would request the appropriate state agencies, including the state departments of Education, Food and Agriculture, and Health Services, and the California School Food Service Association to develop nutritionally sound school lunch menu plans that would provide daily optional plant-centered vegetarian school lunches and would state that nutrition educational materials and instruction should include information about multicultural eating patterns and vegetarian/vegan eating patterns.

The measure would also request the President of the California School Food Service Association to make a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2008.

Fiscal committee: yes.

1 WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics, the
2 American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the
3 American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association,
4 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the
5 National Institutes of Health recommend that there be greater
6 emphasis in the American diet on fruits, vegetables, whole grains,
7 and legumes with a reduction in consumption of animal foods; and

1 WHEREAS, Recent studies indicate that more than one-quarter
2 of California children are overweight or obese and therefore at
3 higher risk of developing health problems, including heart disease,
4 diabetes, asthma, and cancer; and

5 WHEREAS, Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes are
6 generally lower in fat and calories than meat and dairy products,
7 contain no cholesterol, and promote good health because they
8 contain fiber and essential nutrients, including vitamins and
9 minerals, and they also contain phytochemicals and antioxidants
10 that may provide additional protection to reduce the risk of some
11 forms of cancer, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, high blood
12 pressure, and other degenerative diseases; and

13 WHEREAS, A significant percentage of children who rely on
14 free or reduced price school lunches are considered “at risk” for
15 these diet-related degenerative diseases; and

16 WHEREAS, Diet-related diseases take a disproportionate toll
17 among ethnic minorities and ethnic minorities also have
18 dramatically higher rates of lactose intolerance than their
19 Caucasian peers; and

20 WHEREAS, A growing number of California school children
21 either identify themselves as vegetarian or vegan, come from
22 vegetarian or vegan families, or come from families who avoid
23 meat and dairy foods for religious or health reasons; and

24 WHEREAS, Exposure of plant-centered entrees in the school
25 cafeteria will positively influence children with poor eating habits;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, Children with poor eating habits are at a
28 disadvantage if no plant-centered school lunch meals are offered
29 daily in their respective schools; and

30 WHEREAS, The American Dietetic Association has stated that
31 it is their position that appropriately planned vegetarian diets are
32 healthy and nutritionally adequate and that scientific data suggest
33 positive relationships between vegetarian diets and risk reduction
34 for several chronic degenerative diseases and conditions,
35 including obesity, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes
36 mellitus, and some types of cancer; and

37 WHEREAS, The State Department of Health Services is
38 striving to increase public awareness of the importance of eating
39 five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day with studies



1 indicating the vast majority of children do not eat the
2 Recommended Daily Allowance for these foods; and

3 WHEREAS, Increased consumption of locally grown fruits and
4 vegetables promotes a sustainable environment; and

5 WHEREAS, Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes are
6 available through the USDA commodities program; and

7 WHEREAS, The USDA has made available a newer school
8 lunch menu planning option called “Nutrient Standard Menu
9 Planning,” which does not require a meat or meat alternate
10 component, and which is based on the recognition that most
11 nutrients may be obtained from a variety of foods and allows for
12 significantly greater flexibility in menu planning; and

13 WHEREAS, The USDA 1995 School Meals Initiative suggests
14 that school lunch programs, in order to provide variety and
15 encourage consumption and participation should, whenever
16 possible, offer a selection of menu items and foods from which
17 pupils may make choices; now, therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
19 *thereof concurring*, That the appropriate state agencies, including
20 the state departments of Education, Food and Agriculture, and
21 Health Services, and the California School Food Service
22 Association are requested to develop nutritionally sound school
23 lunch menu plans that would provide daily optional plant-centered
24 vegetarian school lunches, prepared without meat or dairy
25 products, in such a way that all pupils are assured nutritionally
26 balanced diets, regardless of their food preferences and
27 avoidances, and the diet is phased in over a period of
28 approximately 4 years; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the optional plant-centered school lunch entrees
30 be developed with a similar standard for variety, cycle of repeat,
31 and availability as meat and dairy options; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That nutrition educational materials and instruction
33 strive to recognize and include information about multicultural
34 eating patterns including vegetarian/vegan eating patterns; and be
35 it further

36 *Resolved*, That the President of the California School Food
37 Service Association is requested to report to the Legislature by
38 January 1, 2008, on programs made to offer optional vegetarian
39 school lunches; and be it further



1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
2 of this resolution to the Director of Health Services, the President
3 of the State Board of Food and Agriculture, the President of the
4 State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public
5 Instruction, and the President of the California School Food
6 Service Association.

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