Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144

Introduced by Assembly Member Mullin

February 24, 2016

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 144—Relative to character education in public schools.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 144, as introduced, Mullin. Public schools: character education. This measure would urge the State Board of Education, county offices of education, and local school governing bodies to increase emphasis on character, citizenship, ethics, and the humane treatment of living creatures in order to promote a humane and compassionate society.

Fiscal committee: yes.

WHEREAS, California’s interest in character education has been progressing since the 1980s, when Senator Albert Rodda initiated a select bipartisan committee on character education, and interest has since been further advanced by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, presidents of the United States, and, more recently, by state legislative and congressional leaders; and

WHEREAS, Section 233.5 of the Education Code authorizes the provisions of character education, and requires each teacher, among other things, to endeavor to promote kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures; and

WHEREAS, Increasingly, the need for kindness toward animals, whether they are pets, farm animals, or creatures in the wild, has
come to play a guiding role in the broader movement for a healthy
and humane world; and
WHEREAS, All children deserve the privilege of learning about
animals, which fosters a sense of caring and is crucial in developing
a sense of civic responsibility and a more humane community; and
WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics are essential
to developing an inclusive society, restoring public confidence in
our institutions, and preparing literate, skilled, and responsible
participants in our schools, government, workplaces, and local
communities; and
WHEREAS, Character education addresses common virtues
and behaviors that support respect, responsibility, trustworthiness,
justice, fairness, caring, giving, service, leadership, initiative, and
teamwork; and
WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics also relate
to the closing of the academic achievement and participation gaps
that currently exist between pupils in our public schools; and
WHEREAS, Implementing California’s Common Core academic
content standards may be enhanced by character education by
increasing commitment to instructional priorities, academic rigor,
and discipline, and may improve school performance and provide
the opportunity for full citizenship; and
WHEREAS, Good character, citizenship, and ethics begin with
good role models and leadership in our homes, communities, and
schools; and
WHEREAS, The character, citizenship, and ethics that are
expected in our society and government, and the rights,
responsibilities, and participation of citizens should be a continual
and meaningful part of character education for every pupil in
prekindergarten through grade 12; and
WHEREAS, The importance of character, citizenship, and ethics
cannot be overestimated in establishing a positive school climate
for pupils, and is the shared responsibility of the entire education
community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate
thereof concurring, That the Legislature urges the State Board of
Education, county offices of education, and local school governing
bodies to increase emphasis on character, citizenship, ethics, and
the humane treatment of living creatures in order to promote a
humane and compassionate society; and be it further
Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, boards of education and administrators of county offices and school districts, and to the author for distribution.