

**Introduced by Senator Gaines
(Coauthors: Senators Bates and Huff)**

May 17, 2016

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 144—Relative to Fireworks Safety Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 144, as introduced, Gaines. Fireworks Safety Month.

This measure would designate June 21, 2016, through July 21, 2016, as Fireworks Safety Month and would urge the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and local fire protection agencies to educate the public about fireworks that have been approved as “safe and sane” and about the risks of improperly using fireworks and of using or selling illegal fireworks.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, Many Californians and visitors to our state will
2 use fireworks to celebrate our nation’s independence on the Fourth
3 of July; and
4 WHEREAS, At least 10 people died in 2014 as a result of
5 fireworks-related injuries either through direct contact with
6 fireworks or in house fires started by fireworks; and
7 WHEREAS, Fireworks were involved in an estimated 10,500
8 additional injuries treated in United States hospital emergency
9 rooms in 2014—about 67 percent of which were treated between
10 June 21 and July 21; and
11 WHEREAS, Children younger than 15 years of age accounted
12 for approximately 35 percent of fireworks-related injuries,
13 including 1,400 injuries caused by sparklers, 1,400 injuries caused

1 by firecrackers, and 100 injuries caused by bottle rockets overall;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, The parts of the body most often injured were
4 hands, fingers, eyes, legs, the face, and head, which potentially
5 results in lifelong disabilities for those injured; and

6 WHEREAS, Bodily injury is not the only damage that can occur
7 from improper use of fireworks. The Department of Forestry and
8 Fire Protection (CalFire) has stated that improper use of fireworks
9 has caused or contributed to wildfires throughout the state; and

10 WHEREAS, Because CalFire responded to 6,335 wildfires
11 between January 2015 and December 2015 that burned 307,958
12 acres at an estimated cost of \$209 million, eliminating any single
13 source of wildfires is important in saving lives, property, and state
14 funds; and

15 WHEREAS, CalFire has urged all people in California to join
16 public fireworks displays to celebrate the Fourth of July rather
17 than using fireworks at their homes or in other unprotected,
18 unsupervised areas; and

19 WHEREAS, CalFire has stated that in order for fireworks to be
20 used by the public, the fireworks must be included on CalFire's
21 "safe and sane" list and must also be authorized by local fire
22 agencies in the area where the fireworks will be used; and

23 WHEREAS, Possession of up to 25 pounds of illegal fireworks
24 is subject to a minimum penalty of \$500, but up to a penalty of
25 \$1,000 and imprisonment in a county jail for one year. Modification
26 of any fireworks to create an explosive device can result in much
27 more severe criminal penalties, including fines of up to \$50,000
28 plus imprisonment; now, therefore, be it

29 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
30 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature designates June 21, 2016,
31 through July 21, 2016, as Fireworks Safety Month; and, be it
32 further

33 *Resolved*, That the Legislature urges CalFire and local fire
34 protection agencies to educate members of the public about
35 fireworks that have been approved as "safe and sane" and about
36 the risks of improperly using fireworks; and, be it further

37 *Resolved*, That the Legislature requests these agencies to advise
38 the public about the high fines for use or sale of illegal fireworks,
39 in addition to the risks of paying for wildfire damage caused by
40 improper or illegal use of fireworks; and, be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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