

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 22, 2011

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 13, 2011

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 9, 2011

**Senate Joint Resolution**

**No. 6**

**Introduced by Senator Kehoe**

**(Principal coauthor: Senator Anderson)**

**(Coauthors: Senators Alquist, Corbett, DeSaulnier, Hancock, Harman, Hernandez, Huff, Lieu, Liu, Rubio, Runner, Vargas, Wright, Wyland, and Yee)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Atkins, Beall, Block, Blumenfield, Cedillo, Cook, Dickinson, Eng, Fletcher, Fong, Galgiani, Halderman, Hall, Hueso, Huffman, Jones, Logue, Monning, John A. Pérez, Portantino, and Williams)

April 28, 2011

Senate Joint Resolution No. 6—Relative to survivors of torture.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 6, as amended, Kehoe. Survivors of torture.

This measure would declare June 26, 2011, a Day in Support of Victims of Torture in California, and would urge the Office of Refugee Resettlement to direct torture treatment funding through the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 *so as to reflect California's role as the nation's largest resettlement destination for torture survivors.*

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Approximately 100,000 residents of the State of
- 2 California have found refuge here after enduring politically
- 3 motivated torture in their home countries; and

1 WHEREAS, These survivors of torture bring their remarkable  
2 fortitude, resiliency, and powerful personal histories to their new  
3 state; and

4 WHEREAS, Many of these survivors have contributed greatly  
5 to California's communities, economy, cultural vibrancy, and  
6 understanding of the importance of human rights through opening  
7 businesses, performing professional services, founding charitable  
8 organizations, speaking out about their experiences, and  
9 volunteering on behalf of others; and

10 WHEREAS, These contributions come in spite of the lingering  
11 physical, emotional, and social impacts of enduring torture; and

12 WHEREAS, Studies and clinical reports on the consequences  
13 of torture have been found to include, but are not limited to,  
14 scarring, disfiguration, chronic pain, nightmares, insomnia,  
15 flashbacks, hypervigilance, difficulty forming relationships of  
16 trust, depression, panic attacks, and startle responses; and

17 WHEREAS, Absent access to appropriate care, these ongoing  
18 effects of torture can prevent or undermine the ability and desire  
19 of torture survivors to restore their dignity and thrive as productive  
20 members of their new California communities; and

21 WHEREAS, Treating the unique impact of torture on survivors  
22 requires highly specialized, holistic treatment; and

23 WHEREAS, California played a key role in the development  
24 of the torture treatment field in the late 1970s and early 1980s  
25 under the leadership of Dr. Jose Quiroga and Ana Deutsch,  
26 themselves refugees who fled from incidents of torture in Chile  
27 and Argentina, respectively, came to Los Angeles, and there went  
28 on to found the Program for Torture Victims (PTV) in order to  
29 attend to the unique panoply of physical, emotional, and legal  
30 challenges faced by their fellow survivors; and

31 WHEREAS, California today is home to the largest number of  
32 torture treatment centers in the United States, including, but not  
33 limited to, the affiliates of the California Consortium of Torture  
34 Treatment Centers—the Center for Justice and Accountability in  
35 San Francisco; the Center for Survivors of Torture, Asian  
36 Americans for Community Involvement in San Jose; the Institute  
37 for Redress and Recovery at Santa Clara University; the Institute  
38 for the Study of Psychosocial Trauma in Palo Alto; Program for  
39 Torture Victims in Los Angeles; the Torture Survivors Project at  
40 the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles; Survivors International

1 in San Francisco; and Survivors of Torture, International in San  
2 Diego; and

3 WHEREAS, These centers collectively serve around 1,000  
4 torture survivors annually; and

5 WHEREAS, These torture treatment programs rely heavily on  
6 the volunteerism of local professionals—among them doctors,  
7 psychologists, psychiatrists, dentists, physical therapists,  
8 interpreters, lawyers, masseurs, plastic surgeons, and others—to  
9 provide holistic treatment far beyond the capacities of the centers’  
10 limited staffs and budgets; and

11 WHEREAS, Each year hundreds of California professionals  
12 donate thousands of hours of their time to acquire the necessary  
13 specialized training and assist torture survivors to heal; and

14 WHEREAS, Each year hundreds of Californians make charitable  
15 financial contributions to help make the services of these nonprofit  
16 centers possible at no charge to the survivors; and

17 WHEREAS, The Mental Health Services Oversight and  
18 Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) could use state-level  
19 public sector avenues to improve regional services for torture  
20 survivors by working with counties to include torture treatment in  
21 county mental health plans reviewed by the MHSOAC; and

22 WHEREAS, Data from the federal Office of Refugee  
23 Resettlement (ORR) demonstrates that California has been the top  
24 destination in the country for humanitarian immigrants (25 percent  
25 of all refugees since 1975, and 28 percent of all asylees in the  
26 federal fiscal year 2009, according to ORR and the California  
27 Refugee Programs Bureau), many of whom are torture survivors,  
28 but funding to provide adequate services for those refugees has  
29 been insufficient because the federal Torture Victims Relief Act  
30 of 1998 has not been fully funded by Congress and ORR has not  
31 distributed domestic torture treatment under the Torture Victims  
32 Relief Act of 1998 formulas to provide adequate funding *to* areas  
33 that serve disproportionate populations of formerly tortured  
34 refugees; and

35 WHEREAS, On June 26, 1997, the United Nations General  
36 Assembly marked the 10th anniversary of its adoption of the United  
37 Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman  
38 or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by establishing that date,  
39 annually, as International Day in Support of Victims of Torture;  
40 and

1 WHEREAS, The Legislature hereby acknowledges the  
2 widespread presence of survivors of torture residing throughout  
3 the State of California; and

4 WHEREAS, The Legislature welcomes and commends the  
5 contributions survivors of torture make to California's  
6 communities, economy, and cultural vibrancy; and

7 WHEREAS, The Legislature expresses its pride in California's  
8 emerging legacy as a place of refuge and healing for those who  
9 have endured torture; and

10 WHEREAS, The Legislature undertakes to encourage the further  
11 development of torture treatment services throughout the state by  
12 honoring professionals and volunteers who have dedicated their  
13 time to the treatment of torture survivors; now, therefore, be it

14 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
15 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges ORR to direct torture  
16 treatment funding through the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998  
17 so as to reflect California's role as the nation's largest resettlement  
18 destination for torture survivors; and be it further

19 *Resolved,* That June 26, 2011, be declared a Day in Support of  
20 Victims of Torture in California; and be it further

21 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
22 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
23 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each  
24 Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the  
25 ~~Unites~~ *United States*, and to the author for appropriate distribution.