

## Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 115

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 242

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 115—Relative to the opioid crisis.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 12, 2018.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 115, McGuire. Opioid crisis.

This measure would recognize the impact opioid-related deaths have had on California communities and would support groups and organizations working in California to combat the epidemic.

WHEREAS, The current opioid epidemic has been declared the worst drug crisis in American history; and

WHEREAS, The opioid crisis has impacted communities big and small across America and right here at home in California, affecting families from all walks of life and backgrounds, as it does not discriminate; and

WHEREAS, California leads the nation in overdoses, as more people die each year from drug overdoses in California than in any other state; and

WHEREAS, Prescription medication misuse, personal use of heroin, and subsequent overdoses are a national epidemic, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, The long-term health consequences of prescription opioid abuse are severe and can lead to daily activity limitations, impaired driving, addiction and other mental health issues, overdose, and death; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, more than 28,000 people died from opioid overdoses, with 14,000 of those deaths involving prescription opioids; and

WHEREAS, In the past, prescription opioids, such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, and codeine, were prescribed for relieving short-term, acute pain. Today, they are increasingly being used to treat chronic, noncancer pain, such as back pain or osteoarthritis, despite serious risks and a lack of evidence of their long-term effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, Sales of prescription opioids in the United States nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2014, but there was not an overall change in the amount of pain Americans reported during that same period; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, opioid-related poisoning and overdose emergency department admissions have continued to increase steadily in California, with more than 4,100 admissions in 2014. The majority of admissions from 2006 to 2014, inclusive, involved prescription opioids; and

WHEREAS, While there is a crisis in all corners of California, rural counties that have few services have been hit particularly hard; and

WHEREAS, The County of Humboldt's prescription rate for opioids is 90 percent higher than the statewide rate; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the County of Humboldt had a staggering rate of 1,145 opioid prescriptions per 1,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, The County of Humboldt has the second highest per capita rate of opioid overdoses in the state, with the County of Inyo being number one; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, state statistics show 4.6 people per 100,000 residents overdosed on opiates statewide; and

WHEREAS, The County of Humboldt's overdose rate is nearly five times higher than the state overdose rate; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the County of Shasta had nearly 250,000 opioid prescriptions, with a staggering rate of 1,160 opioid prescriptions per 1,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the County of Shasta experienced 16 opioid overdose deaths; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, the County of Shasta experienced at least 64 opioid overdose emergency department visits, excluding heroin-related visits; and

WHEREAS, The opioid drug crisis is also caused by increased heroin use and overdoses of street heroin; and

WHEREAS, Heroin is the one exception to the statewide leveling trend of opioid-related deaths. Heroin deaths have continued to increase steadily by 67 percent since 2006, with a 2014 death rate of 1.4 per 100,000, and account for a growing share of the state's total opioid-related deaths; and

WHEREAS, As the most populous state in the country, with 38.8 million residents as of 2015, California's raw number of individuals affected by improper opioid prescribing and misuse is substantial, with rates varying significantly across, and even within, counties; and

WHEREAS, California's highest opioid rates per capita are in several northern California rural counties. For example, prescription opioid-related death rates in the Counties of Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Plumas, and Shasta are two to three times higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, The Counties of Orange, San Diego, and San Francisco are large, urban counties with higher-than-state-average death rates, accounting for a greater total number of deaths in California. Additionally, the County of Los Angeles held the highest record for deaths related to opioid overdose in California in 2016; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislature recognizes the dramatic impact opioid-related deaths have had on our families, friends, colleagues, and communities, and how these deaths have strained our health care safety nets and emergency departments; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature supports groups and organizations working in California to combat this epidemic and to provide resources, help, and support for individuals facing opioid addiction; and be it further

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

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