

Date of Hearing: June 1, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON RULES
Blanca Pacheco, Chair
ACR 211 (Celeste Rodriguez) – As Introduced May 21, 2026

SUBJECT: Zoot Suit Riots.

SUMMARY: Commemorates June 2026 as the 83rd anniversary of the Zoot Suit Riots, which are an important part of Los Angeles and California history; and, commemorates every June as the annual anniversary of the Zoot Suit Riots. Specifically, **this resolution** makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) The Zoot Suit Riots were a series of conflicts that occurred in June 1943 in the City of Los Angeles between United States servicemen and Mexican American youths, the latter of whom wore outfits called zoot suits. The zoot suit consisted of a broad-shouldered drape jacket, balloon-leg trousers, and, sometimes, a flamboyant hat.
- 2) Pressures related to the United States involvement in World War II contributed to the racial tensions that preceded the riots. Workers were needed in the agricultural and service sectors of the United States to fill the jobs vacated by those who were serving in the military.
- 3) An agreement was reached with Mexico whereby temporary workers from Mexico were brought into the United States. This influx of Mexican workers was not particularly welcomed by White Americans.
- 4) The Zoot Suit Riots are commonly associated with the Sleepy Lagoon murder, which occurred in August 1942. On the night of August 1, 1942, zoot-suiters were involved in a fight at a party near the Sleepy Lagoon. There was public outcry against the zoot-suiters, fueled by local tabloids.
- 5) Several of the zoot-suiters who were arrested were tried and, in January 1943, convicted of murder. However, many people denounced the circus atmosphere of the trial and attacked the verdict as a miscarriage of justice. The convictions of the Mexican American youths were later reversed on appeal in October 1944.
- 6) During the period from 1942 through 1943, the news media continued to portray the zoot-suiters as dangerous gang members who were capable of murder. It was in this racially charged atmosphere that the conflict between predominantly White servicemen stationed in southern California and Mexican American youths in the area began.
- 7) Within months of the Sleepy Lagoon convictions, the City of Los Angeles erupted in what are commonly referred to as the Zoot Suit Riots. The riots began on June 3, 1943, after a group of sailors stated that they had been attacked by a group of Mexican American zoot-suiters.
- 8) The worst of the rioting occurred on the night of June 7, when thousands of servicemen and citizens prowled the streets of the downtown City of Los Angeles, attacking zoot-suiters as well as members of minority groups who were not wearing zoot suits.

- 9) As the riots died down, California Governor Earl Warren ordered the creation of a citizens' committee to investigate and determine the cause of the Zoot Suit Riots.
- 10) The committee's report indicated that there were several factors involved, but that racism was the central cause of the riots and that it was exacerbated by the response of the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as by biased and inflammatory media coverage.
- 11) The Zoot Suit Riots are an important part of Los Angeles and California history and it is critical that we mark the 83rd anniversary of this event appropriately.

FISCAL EFFECT: This resolution is keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Michael Erke / RLS. / (916) 319-2800