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California Assembly Bill HR 36 Relative to Pluto's planetary status

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STATUS REPORT

Date Released: Wednesday, September 6, 2006

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BILL NUMBER: HR 36 INTRODUCED BILL TEXT

*INTRODUCED BY Assembly Members Richman and Canciamilla
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aghazarian, Bass, Benoit, Berg, Bermudez, Blakeslee, Bogh, Calderon, Chan, Chavez, Cogdill, Cohn, Coto, Daucher, DeVore, Emmerson, Frommer, Garcia, Goldberg, Haynes, Jerome Horton, Shirley Horton, Houston, Huff, Karnette,*

Keene, Koretz, La Malfa, Laird, Leno, Lieber, Liu, Matthews, Maze, Mountjoy, Mullin, Nakanishi, Nation, Negrete McLeod, Niello, Parra, Plescia, Ridley-Thomas, Sharon Runner, Ruskin, Salinas, Strickland, Tran, Walters, Wolk, Wyland, and Yee)

AUGUST 24, 2006

Relative to Pluto's planetary status.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST HOUSE OR SENATE RESOLUTIONS DO NOT CONTAIN A DIGEST

WHEREAS, Recent astronomical discoveries, including Pluto's oblong orbit and the sighting of a slightly larger Kuiper Belt object, have led astronomers to question the planetary status of Pluto; and

WHEREAS, The mean-spirited International Astronomical Union decided on August 24, 2006, to disrespect Pluto by stripping Pluto of its planetary status and reclassifying it as a lowly dwarf planet; and

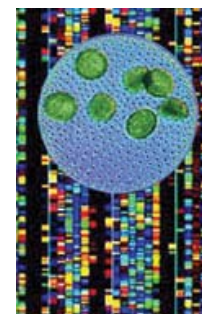
WHEREAS, Pluto was discovered in 1930 by an American, Clyde Tombaugh, at the Lowell Observatory in Arizona, and this discovery resulted in millions of Californians being taught that Pluto was the ninth planet in the solar system; and

WHEREAS, Pluto, named after the Roman God of the underworld and affectionately sharing the name of California's most famous animated dog, has a special connection to California history and culture; and

WHEREAS, Downgrading Pluto's status will cause psychological harm to some Californians who question their place in the universe and worry about the instability of universal constants; and

WHEREAS, The deletion of Pluto as a planet renders millions of text books, museum displays, and children's refrigerator art projects obsolete, and represents a substantial unfunded mandate that must be paid by dwindling Proposition 98 education funds, thereby harming California's children and widening its budget deficits; and

WHEREAS, The deletion of Pluto as a planet is a hasty, ill-considered scientific heresy similar to questioning the Copernican theory, drawing maps of a round world, and proving the existence of



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the time and space continuum; and

WHEREAS, The downgrading of Pluto reduces the number of planets available for legislative leaders to hide redistricting legislation and other inconvenient political reform measures; and

WHEREAS, The California Legislature, in the closing days of the 2005-06 session, has been considering few matters important to the future of California, and the status of Pluto takes precedence and is worthy of this body's immediate attention; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the Assembly hereby condemns the International Astronomical Union's decision to strip Pluto of its planetary status for its tremendous impact on the people of California and the state's long term fiscal health; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly Clerk shall send a copy of the resolution to the International Astronomical Union and to any Californian who, believing that his or her legislator is addressing the problems that threaten the future of the Golden State, requests a copy of the resolution.

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August 26, 2006 Saturday
Fourth Edition

SECTION: ROP ZONE; News; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 963 words

HEADLINE: Boot **Pluto?** Astrology's dismay off the charts;
Many stand by "dwarf **planet**"

BYLINE: Jane Spencer, The Wall Street Journal

BODY:

The ruling by the world's top astronomers to boot **Pluto from the planet** category is sending shock waves through another set of dedicated stargazers: the world of astrologers, who are mulling how this turn of events might affect our moods, our lucky numbers and our chances of getting a date.

For weeks, astrologers have been buzzing about the proposal approved Thursday at the International Astronomical Union (IAU) general assembly in Prague, Czech Republic, that will recast the map of the solar system for the first time since 1930.

After days of impassioned debate, the astronomers voted to demote **Pluto**, the smallest of the nine **planets**, to a new class of solar-system bodies called "dwarf **planets**."

Astrologers think that the positions of the moon, sun and stars affect human affairs and that people born under the 12 signs of the zodiac tend to pick up qualities of the **planets** associated with those signs.

Some astrologers, including leaders of the American Federation of Astrologers and The Astrological Association of Great Britain, are standing by **Pluto**. They say they will continue to regard the icy orb as a full-blown **planet** with a powerful pull on our psyche, despite the astronomers' decision.

"Whether he's a **planet**, an asteroid, or a radioactive matzo ball, **Pluto** has proven himself worthy of a permanent place in all horoscopes," says Shelley Ackerman, columnist for the spirituality Web site Beliefnet.com. Ackerman criticized the IAU for not including astrologers in its decision.

Wall Street's best-known astrologer, Arch Crawford, 65, who has studied the effect of the **planets** on the Dow Jones industrial average, says, "I'm going to continue using it [**Pluto**]. They [astronomers] can stick it where the sun don't shine."

Thursday's ruling in Prague brought good news to some. The astronomers indicated several planetlike bodies including the asteroid Ceres and the newly discovered UB313, nicknamed "Xena" will also be classified as dwarf **planets**.

That has generated excitement among a small group of practitioners known as "minor-**planet** astrologers." They have long contended that outer-lying asteroids and ice balls exert a powerful tug on our psychological makeup.

Some astrologers think that officially introducing new dwarf **planets** to the charts might give astrologers additional information about people, by providing more planetary bodies and forces to study in the charts.

"This is a moment that I've been waiting for, for a long time," says Eric Francis, a minor-**planet** astrologer who edits the Web site Planetwaves.net. "People are finally talking about Charon." Charon is **Pluto's** largest moon, which astronomers briefly considered granting official **planet** status at the IAU meeting.

Francis and many other minor-**planet** enthusiasts are interested in raising awareness about Charon and the new dwarf **planets**, Ceres and UB313, in part because they consider them female **planets** symbolizing a rush of new maternal energy into the cosmos.

"Most of our clients are women, and we need stories women can relate to," Francis says.

A **planet's** gender is determined largely by the name given to it by astronomers.

StarIQ.com astrologer Michael Wolfstar suggests that the asteroid Ceres is a humanitarian, compassionate force "associated with relief operations, the food industry and parent-child relationships." According to the site, Ceres is currently pushing for "the return of refugees to southern Lebanon" and "reforms in the organic-milk industry."

The IAU decision had less impact on some older branches of astrology that ignore the influence of more recently discovered **planets**, such as Uranus (discovered in 1781) and Neptune (discovered in 1846).

In the Indian tradition of Vedic astrology, for example, astrologers generally use the first five **planets**: Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. Modern astrologers, who account for an estimated 90 percent of U.S. practitioners, have long worked with a nine-**planet** system.

This is also not the first time a new discovery has rocked the astrology world. In 1977, astronomer Charles Kowal discovered Chiron, a comet between Saturn and Uranus. Some astrologers welcomed Chiron into the planetary fold and many still use it today.

Companies that make chart-reading software for astrologers are adjusting their products to include more information on dwarf **planets**.

Astrolabe, an astrology-software company in Brewster, Mass., released a software patch this week for users that provides additional information on Ceres.

Horoscope columnists are wrestling with whether to incorporate the new dwarf **planets** into their chart readings.

Michael Lutin, columnist for Vanity Fair, says he will consider the newcomers. But he notes that they aren't likely to have massive impact on our personal lives because of their location in at the outer reaches of the solar system: "UB313 is never going to tell you whether Wednesday is good for romance."

Material from Bloomberg News is included in this report.

Astrology facts

Astrology dates to the Babylonians, who used charts to predict the recurrence of seasons. It was introduced to the Greeks in the fourth century B.C., and later embraced by the Romans and Arabs.

Astrologers charge for compiling personal charts, which use the position of the **planets** at the time of a client's birth to make conclusions about the client's personality, abilities and the future.

About 31 percent of Americans believe in astrology, according to a 2003 Harris Poll of 2,201 adults.

Americans spend about \$200 million a year on astrology, said Stephanie Jean Clement of the American Federation of Astrologers.

Amazon.com carries more than 48,000 titles that touch on astrology.

There are more than 10,000 full-time astrologers in the United States and up to 175,000 part-timers, according to Clement.

Bloomberg News

LOAD-DATE: August 27, 2006

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The New York Times

August 25, 2006 Friday
Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Column 1; National Desk; Pg. 13

LENGTH: 633 words

HEADLINE: Ex-**Planet's** Fans Voice Dismay and Sorrow

BYLINE: By JESSE McKINLEY

DATELINE: SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 24

BODY:

Sitting in **Pluto's**, a salad and sandwich shop in this city's Marina District, John Neal summed up his feelings, and those of many other earthlings, about the sudden shrinking of his solar system.

"Pluto

gets no respect, man," Mr. Neal, 23, said. "I mean, I took an astronomy class in college, and I still don't know anything about it."

Pluto, we hardly knew you. Indeed, across the country, and presumably the universe, the news that **Pluto** was no longer considered a full **planet** was met with a mix of surprise and shrugs, even as people struggled to eulogize a cosmic entity that most know very little about except its size (small), its distance from Earth (great) and its weather (terrible).

The main effect, in fact, seemed to be to mystify further a populace that already seemed almost universally confused about the former **planet**.

"I think its probably a star," said Nick Sbicca, 22, who was visiting the Exploratorium, the children's science center, on Thursday. "I really don't know. But I think there's definitely more than eight **planets**."

Or at least there were, before **Pluto** was demoted on Thursday to "dwarf **planet**" status by a vote of the International Astronomical Union in Prague, in part because of a wonky orbit that periodically swerves into that of Neptune.

None of which mattered to fans of **Pluto**, many of whom, like the ex-**planet** itself, were little.

"I like **Pluto**," said Ashleigh Sundquist, 8, who was at the Exploratorium. "Nobody lives there."

That opinion was seconded by Kristen Young, 9, of Chicago, whose knowledge of **Pluto** was roughly that of many adults.

"It's cold," she said. "And it's small. And you can't go on it because it has gas."

Among the elders of the third **planet**

from the Sun, of course, there were some practical concerns. The World Book Encyclopedia had been holding the presses for its 2007 edition until **Pluto's** status could be clarified. With the fall semester looming, some school districts were already looking at updating their science textbooks, and even planetarium staffs had started rethinking planetary models.

"I woke up this morning, and there was one less **planet**," said Al Whitaker, a spokesman for the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala. "But I understand that **Pluto** wants a recount."

Other groups were defiant, including the American Federation of Astrologers, which said the astronomers' decision would have no effect on their charting of futures.

"It doesn't really matter what you call it," the president of the group, Patricia Hardin, said from her home in Knoxville, Tenn. "As far as I'm concerned, **Pluto** is still an effective energy source that's influence is felt on this earth."

Sure enough, some people also asked the existential questions that the cosmos typically inspires. Why did this happen? What does it mean? And, of course, how does this effect Mickey Mouse's dog?

Soon after the announcement from the astronomical union, Disney executives were peppered with questions about whether **Pluto's** planetary status would affect Mickey's sidekick. The answer was no.

"He's taking the news in stride," said Lisa Haines, a spokeswoman for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

Even at Disney, though, it seemed that people were distancing the cosmic outcast.

"**Pluto** was not necessarily named after **Pluto the planet**," Ms. Haines said. "We've got absolutely nothing on record that even draws a connection between the two. And we're certainly not changing **Pluto's** name."

Back at **Pluto's**, the sandwich shop here, another stargazer, Chris McGrew, said he was not surprised by the news.

"It's just the natural progression of things," Mr. McGrew said. "The more you learn, the more assumptions are going to get turned upside down. It's just part of science. And life."

URL: <http://www.nytimes.com>

GRAPHIC: Photo: Visitors to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum yesterday viewed **Pluto**, the tiny dark sphere dwarfed by Jupiter, at middle. (Photo by Brendan Smialowski for The New York Times)

LOAD-DATE: August 25, 2006

Funeral for a Planet



JPL's Varoujan Gorjian (BS '92), who works on the Spitzer Space Telescope team, cut quite a figure as the red planet.

Their heads hung low, accompanied by black-clad mourners and a jazz band, eight planets marched in a New Orleans–style funeral procession for Pluto in the 30th annual Pasadena Doo Dah Parade. They were joined by more than 1,500 parade participants, among which were the Marching Lumberjacks, guru Yogi Ramesh, Raelian devotees, the Zorthian nymph snake sisters, and the Men of Leisure and Their Synchronized Napping Team, who stopped every now and then to recline. Marching Lumberjack Carolyn Wyneken, who drove 700 miles from Humboldt County for the event, exclaimed, “Wow, that is awesome! That is so good, and necessary,” upon seeing the open casket with its papier-mâché Pluto.

One of the mourners, Caltech Image Processing and Analysis Center staff engineer Kaly Rengarajan, saw the event as a way to educate the public. “The very idea of

Pluto being demoted is so exciting. We're trying to refine what we knew before. I'm so glad people are being made aware!" she raved.

Saturn, played by JPL postdoc Angelle Tanner and accompanied by her many rings, organized the march and voiced the sentiments of most of her fellow planets when she noted, "Most astronomers don't think Pluto should be a planet, but we all miss it." Some planets, however, felt strong-armed into participation—as trumpet-playing Earth (Samantha Lawler, BS '05) noted, Saturn was "writing my recommendation letters."

Uranus (astronomy postdoc Nicholas Law) seemed to bear a grudge, sporting a T-shirt that proclaimed, "Pluto had it coming." And mourner Zane Crawford, a JPL visiting graduate student from the University of Colorado who drummed the funeral march, didn't hide his contempt. "Pluto did have it coming, seriously," he said.



Saturn helps a tardy Mercury with his wings.

Ironically, Mercury (JPL postdoc Joe Carson), winged messenger to the gods, was late. But when he showed up, he was all sympathy, perhaps because now he is the smallest planet in the solar system and fears his turn is next. After all, Mercury is only about twice the size of Pluto. "To be honest, I felt bad for Pluto," he said about the planetary excommunication. "My little cousin started crying when she found out Pluto got demoted."

Even Caltech Professor of Planetary Astronomy Mike Brown showed up, and brought along his daughter Lilah to play the fledgling Eris. "The dwarf planet was originally supposed to be named after her, so it's appropriate," said Brown. No cosmic scuffles arose, and everyone strove to maintain peace, for Pluto's sake. While some memorial services were held in Washington, D.C., days after Pluto's ejection from planetary circles on August 24, 2006, none came close to this procession. Thirty thousand onlookers gathered in the balmy weather under clear skies. And the planets were all in alignment. —EN

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Pluto still a planet in skies of New Mexico

By Diana M. Alba Santa Fe Bureau
 Article Launched: 03/14/2007 01:00:00 AM MDT

SANTA FE — International astronomers may have formally demoted Pluto, but it's still a planet in the eyes of some state lawmakers.

Under a measure approved by the House on Tuesday, Pluto will regain its status as a planet as it passes through New Mexico skies. The joint memorial also declared March 13 as "Pluto Planet Day."

Last year, the International Astronomical Union downgraded Pluto from a planet to a dwarf planet.

Pluto's discoverer, the late Clyde Tombaugh, helped found New Mexico State University's astronomy department and spent much of his life in Las Cruces.

Tombaugh's widow, Patsy Tombaugh, and his daughter, Annette Tombaugh-Sitze — both of Las Cruces, were on hand in the House chambers as legislators passed the memorial.

"In a way, it's saying that the state is supporting the fact it should be a planet," said Patsy Tombaugh, 94. "I think it's nice they did that."

Some of Clyde Tombaugh's ashes are on board the New Horizons spacecraft, which set out for Pluto in early 2006. It's scheduled to pass by Pluto in 2015.

Patsy Tombaugh said there's a movement among some astronomers to grant Pluto back its planetary status. But whether it succeeds or not seems to make little difference to

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Patsy Tombaugh.

"It will always be a planet to me — no matter what they decide to do," she said.

Tombaugh-Sitze said her father would have been



pleased with the House's move.

"I'm thrilled," she said. "It brings back a little of Pluto's dignity."

The debate about whether Pluto should be a planet isn't new. Patsy Tombaugh said her husband, who died in 1997, heard plenty of it. He thought, however, discussion shouldn't focus so much on whether the object was a planet, but rather that it existed, she said.

"No matter what you call it, it's there," she said.

Patsy Tombaugh said the House memorial gives recognition not only to her late husband, but also to the state's contributions to the field of astronomy.

The measure, House Joint Memorial 54, was sponsored by Rep. Joni Gutierrez, D-Mesilla. It moves to the Senate.

Diana M. Alba can be reached at dalba@lcsun-news.com

On the Net

- House Joint Memorial 54 can be found on the Internet at www.legis.state.nm.us Pluto still a planet in skies of New Mexico

To learn more about Pluto and NASA's New Horizons Plut-Kuiper Belt Mission, click "<http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/index.php>." here.

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HEADLINE:

Impromptu Memorial Appears at Scale Model of Solar System on National Mall, Says Universities Space Research Association

DATELINE: WASHINGTON Sept. 5

BODY:

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- An impromptu memorial to **Pluto's planet** status has appeared at a scale model of the Solar System on the National Mall in Washington, DC. At **Pluto's** place in the Voyage exhibition -- a one-to-10-billion scale model of the Solar System designed to convey the distances between the Sun and its **planets** and the relative sizes of these bodies -- visitors have left condolence cards, affectionate notes, and flowers to mark the passing of **Pluto from "planet" to "dwarf planet"** status. **Pluto** has held the designation of "**planet**" since 1930 but on August 24th the International Astronomical Union announced that it had agreed to adopt a new definition of "**planet**" -- **and that Pluto** did not make the cut.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20060905/PHTU022>)

One note left at the **Pluto**

stanchion of the Voyage exhibition reads "We'll Miss You" in bold letters and is 'signed' by the other eight **planets** (Jupiter seems to be the John Hancock of the **planets**). Another note that seems to be in a child's handwriting reads, "**Pluto** will always be a **planet** in my heart" and is signed "XOXO."

About the Voyage Exhibition

Interspersed along 600 meters of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the Voyage exhibition is a one-to-10-billion scale model of the Solar System that conveys a true sense of the distances between, and relative sizes of, our Sun and its **planets**

in a very tangible, identifiable way. The exhibition stretches from the National Air and Space Museum to the Smithsonian Castle. The vision is an exhibition that can engage an entire community -- students, families, teachers, and the public -- in a powerful story about Earth's place in space. Complementing the exhibit itself and maximizing its impact are tours and tour brochures, activity guides promoting use of the exhibition as a Solar System laboratory, grade K-13 lessons on Solar System science, workshops for educators, programs for thousands of students in classrooms that are delivered by planetary scientists and engineers, and programs for families and the public.

The National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSE) is now making replicas of the Voyage exhibition available for permanent installation in communities across the nation, together with the full suite of programs and resources. Voyage can be installed on a university campus, in a community park, or along a downtown street.

The Voyage exhibition is comprised of thirteen stanchions, ten of which are 8.5 feet tall and hold the model worlds and

full-color storyboards. The Sun is represented as a striking gold sphere. **Planets** and moons are depicted to scale as 3-dimensional crystalline spheres laser-sculpted inside solid glass. The imagery and text provide a compelling up-close view of the **planets** and moons, in contrast to the 3-D models that speak to the powerful reality of tiny worlds in a vast space.

Meticulously designed and placed, Voyage is a seamless fusion of sculpture and science education -- an achievement both aesthetic and instructional deemed worthy of placement on the National Mall under the strict standards of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission.

The Voyage began in October 2001 with installation of the exhibition on the National Mall through a partnership between Challenger Center for Space Science Education, the Smithsonian Institution, and NASA. Now managed by NCESSSE, the exhibit has the power to engage communities across the nation in the wonders of space, the sprit of discovery, and the quest to understand.

NCESSSE is part of the Universities Space Research Association (USRA), a national consortium of 100 universities established 37 years ago by the National Academy of Sciences. USRA operates programs and facilities in space-related science, technology, and related education. Last year, researchers from more than 400 universities and other organizations participated in USRA activities. More information about USRA can be found at <http://www.usra.edu/>.

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Web site: <http://www.usra.edu/>
<http://www.voyagesolarsystem.org/>

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