

1999 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 51

May 6, 1999 – Introduced by Representatives POCAN, BERCEAU, BOCK, BOYLE, COLON, HUBER, KRUG, J. LEHMAN, MILLER, PLOUFF, RHOADES, VRAKAS and YOUNG, cosponsored by Senators BURKE and RISSER. Referred to Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs.

1 **Relating to:** memorializing Congress to close the School of the Americas.

2 Whereas, the School of the Americas was established in Panama in 1946 and
3 is presently located in Fort Benning, Georgia; and

4 Whereas, the School of the Americas has trained over 59,000 troops from Latin
5 America and the Caribbean since its inception in 1946 and currently trains 900 to
6 2,000 such soldiers per year at Fort Benning, Georgia, at an annual cost to the
7 American taxpayers of nearly \$20,000,000; and

8 Whereas, it has been admitted that training manuals used for years by the
9 School of the Americas have advocated execution, false imprisonment, physical
10 abuse and other forms of torture; and

11 Whereas, many School of the Americas graduates have been involved in a wide
12 range of human rights abuses; and

13 Whereas, 2 of the 3 Salvadoran officers cited as being responsible for the 1980
14 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero were School of the Americas graduates,
15 including death squad founder and leader Robert D'Aubuisson; and

1 Whereas, 10 of the 12 officers cited as being involved in the massacre of 900
2 civilians at El Mozote in El Salvador graduated from the School of the Americas; and

3 Whereas, 19 of the 26 officers cited in the November 1989 murder of 6 Jesuit
4 priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in San Salvador, El Salvador, were
5 School of the Americas graduates; and

6 Whereas, over half of the human rights violations and torture that occurred in
7 Colombia by military officials in this decade was performed by officials trained by the
8 School of the Americas; and

9 Whereas, Guatemalan Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, a CIA agent who was
10 implicated in the killings of U.S. citizen Michael Devine and Efraim Bamaca,
11 husband of U.S. lawyer Jennifer Harbury, is a School of the Americas graduate; and

12 Whereas, the editorial boards of the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Bangor Daily News*,
13 *Boston Globe*, *The Capital Times*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Des Moines Register*, *New*
14 *York Times*, *San Antonio Express-News* and *Syracuse Post-Standard*, among others,
15 have called for the closure of the School of the Americas; and

16 Whereas, the *Washington Post*, in its November 26, 1997, edition, stated, “over
17 these years [the School of the Americas] is a school of horrors, a school of assassins,
18 operating in our back yard with U.S. taxpayer money”; and

19 Whereas, the California Chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has passed a
20 resolution urging the closure of the School of the Americas, and the national
21 organization is deliberating the same resolution; and

22 Whereas, there is growing opposition to the School of the Americas in the U.S.
23 house of representatives; and

