



Attention:
Foreign Affairs LA

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign affairs aide
From: Abraham Niziblian, Government Affairs Director
Date: June 1, 2004

Re: *The Genocide Resolution deserves a vote*

Attached please find an article from the Fresno Bee about local Armenian Americans demonstrating in favor of the passage of the Genocide Resolution. As we approach the close of the 108th Congress, supporters of this human rights legislation are growing increasingly concerned that the leadership in the House and Senate have yet to schedule this measure for a vote. Below, please find ten compelling reasons why the Genocide Resolution should be adopted:

- 1) The Genocide Resolution seeks to prevent future genocides.
- 2) The Genocide Resolution strengthens America's commitment to the Genocide Convention.
- 3) The Genocide Resolution was unanimously adopted by the House Judiciary Committee.
- 4) The Genocide Resolution has broad, bipartisan Congressional support.
- 5) The Genocide Resolution has been endorsed by a coalition of over 100 organizations.
- 6) Pulitzer Prize winning author Samantha Power supports the Genocide Resolution.
- 7) Over forty (40) legislators participated personally in the Capitol Hill Observance of the Armenian Genocide.
- 8) One hundred and ninety-one (191) members of Congress asked President this April to recognize the Armenian Genocide.
- 9) Over 100,000 people have taken part in the Genocide Resolution postcard campaign.
- 10) A sold-out System Of A Down benefit concert was held in Los Angeles on April 24th to support passage of the Genocide Resolution.

If I can be of any help, please contact me at (202) 431-3806 or abraham@anca.org.

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<http://www.fresnobee.com/local/story/8639204p-9510444c.html>

Fresno protest backs Armenian resolution

By Pablo Lopez

The Fresno Bee

(Updated Saturday, May 29, 2004, 7:28 AM)

A group of protesters picketed outside a northwest Fresno restaurant Friday, hoping to get U.S. Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert to commit to a resolution that recognizes the Armenian genocide.

Hastert, in town to support Republican state Sen. Roy Ashburn's bid for Congress, never got a chance to address the issue. Once the \$250-a-plate luncheon at Pardini's was over, Hastert was rushed to the airport so he could head to his next engagement.

The protesters, however, didn't leave empty-handed.



About 30 people protest outside a Fresno fund-raiser where House Speaker Dennis Hastert spoke Friday. They are upset that an Armenian genocide resolution is being held up in the House of Representatives after passing the House Judiciary Committee by a unanimous vote.

Mark Crosse / The Fresno Bee

Afterward, Ashburn said he told Hastert that he supports the resolution that recognizes the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923. If elected to Congress, Ashburn said, "I would ask Hastert to bring it to a vote."

At issue is House Resolution 193, marking the 15th anniversary of the U.S. implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

This landmark convention, adopted by the U.N. in 1948, specifically identifies genocide as a crime under international law. The resolution cites the Armenian genocide as an example of past genocides, along with the Holocaust and the Rwandan and Cambodian genocides.

The House Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the resolution more than a year ago, but Hastert has not brought it to the House floor for a vote, said Rich Sanikian, a member of the Armenian National Committee, Central California, which organized the protest at Pardini's.

“If Hastert doesn’t bring this human-rights legislation to a vote in the next six months, it will die at the end of this congressional session,” Sanikian said.

Hastert is an Illinois Republican. About 30 people protested outside the restaurant, carrying signs that read: “Hastert hear the cry from history” and “Hastert holds the genocide vote hostage.”

Sanikian said local leaders who support the resolution include Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa; Fresno Mayor Alan Autry; and Ashburn’s political rival, former state Sen. Jim Costa.

Costa, a Fresno Democrat, and Ashburn are battling for the open 20th Congressional District seat. Incumbent Cal Dooley, D-Fresno, is not running for reelection.

The Central Valley is home to more than 60,000 Armenians, one of the oldest ethnic groups in the area. Armenians want Turkey to recognize the genocide and pay restitution.

The modern Turkish republic, which evolved from the Ottoman Empire, disputes that a genocide occurred. The U.S. government has repeatedly balked at passing a resolution because Turkey is an ally and its location is of strategic importance to American interests abroad.

Ashburn’s luncheon drew a who’s-who list of civic leaders, including state Sen. Chuck Poochigian, a Fresno Republican; Madera County Supervisor Frank Bigelow; and Mike Reynolds, founder of the Three Strikes repeat offender law.

News crews were not allowed inside the private party. Guests could get photographs with Hastert for a \$2,000 donation.

Afterward, Ashburn said if he is elected to Congress he could help the Armenian cause and protect Valley interests because he will be part of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives. “I will have committee assignments and seek a leadership role,” he said. If Costa is elected, Ashburn said, “he would be in the minority, a back bench newcomer.”

Costa said he has been an effective legislator because he has bi-partisan support. He said he has been a longtime supporter of the genocide resolution.

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