

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 2

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 21

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 2—Relative to the Armenian Genocide.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 23, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 2, Gatto. Armenian Genocide.

This measure would designate the week of April 18 to 24, 2013, as “California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923,” and would memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to observe the California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide by participating in the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Project.

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923 was the first genocide of the 20th century, in which 1.5 million men, women, and children lost their lives at the hands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in their attempt to systematically eliminate the Armenian race; and

WHEREAS, In their 3,000 year historic homeland in Asia Minor, Armenians were subjected to severe and unjust persecution and brutality by the Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire before and after the turn of the 20th century, including widespread acts of destruction and murder during the period from 1894 to 1896, inclusive, and again in 1909; and

WHEREAS, The massacre of the Armenians constituted one of the most atrocious violations of human rights in the history of the world; and

WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, in persuading his army commanders that the merciless persecution and killing of Jews, Poles, and other people would bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”; and

WHEREAS, Unlike other people and governments that have admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor regimes, and despite the overwhelming proof of genocidal intent, the Republic of Turkey has inexplicably and adamantly denied the occurrence of the crimes against humanity committed by the Ottoman and Young Turk rulers, and those denials compound the grief of the few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate the memory of the victims, and cause continuing pain to the descendants of the victims; and

WHEREAS, Leaders of nations with strategic, commercial, and cultural ties to the Republic of Turkey should be reminded of their duty to encourage Turkish officials to cease efforts to distort facts and deny the history of events surrounding the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, The determination of those who continue to speak the truth about the Armenian Genocide is tested to this day with some of these speakers of truth being silenced by violent means; and

WHEREAS, The accelerated level and scope of denial and revisionism, coupled with the passage of time and the fact that very few survivors remain who can serve as reminders of indescribable brutality and tormented lives, compel a sense of urgency in efforts to solidify recognition of historical truth; and

WHEREAS, By consistently remembering and forcefully condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians, and honoring the survivors as well as other victims of similar heinous conduct, we guard against repetition of such acts of genocide and provide the American public with a greater understanding of its heritage; and

WHEREAS, This measure would provide that the Legislature deplores the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person in this country or abroad to deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, California is home to the largest Armenian-American population in the United States, and Armenians living in California have enriched our state through their leadership in business, agriculture, academia, government, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to prevent recurrence of the crime of genocide; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the State of California commends its conscientious educators who teach about human rights and genocide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby designates the week of April 18 to 24, 2013, as “California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and be it further

Resolved, That California commemorates California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide through the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Project; and be it further

Resolved, That the State of California respectfully calls upon the Congress and the President of the United States to act likewise and to formally and consistently recognize and reaffirm the historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people constituted genocide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls upon the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge the facts of the Armenian Genocide and to work toward a just resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, Members of the United States Congress, the Governor, and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States.