

2012 Bill Text CO S.J.R. 33

THE STATE OF COLORADO
BILL TEXT

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2012 CO S.J.R. 33

COLORADO 2ND REGULAR SESSION OF THE 68TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 33

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
SIXTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF COLORADO

BILL TRACKING REPORT: [2012 Bill Tracking CO S.J.R. 33](#)

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VERSION: Adopted

VERSION-DATE: April 20, 2012

SYNOPSIS:

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12-033

CONCERNING THE "COLORADO DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE **ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**"
ON APRIL 24, 2012.

TEXT: WHEREAS, This year marks the 97th anniversary of the first genocide of the 20th century, the **Armenian genocide**, when 1.5 million men, women, and children of Armenian descent were victims of a brutal genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923; and

WHEREAS, As a result, there are fewer than 75,000 indigenous Armenians living within the borders of modern Turkey today; and

WHEREAS, The former United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated in 1915, "Whatever crimes the most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, and whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most

debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes of this devoted people."; and

WHEREAS, The killing of the Armenian people was followed by the systematic destruction of churches, schools, libraries, treasures of art, and cultural monuments that continues to this day in an attempt to eliminate all traces of a noble civilization with a history of more than 3,000 years; and

WHEREAS, Colorado newspapers widely reported the extermination of the Armenian people, and Colorado communities generously raised funds to assist the survivors, known at that time as the "Starving Armenians"; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the New York Times reported on a newly exposed official Ottoman document revealing that 972,000 Armenians disappeared from population records within one year, between 1915 and 1916; and

WHEREAS, Despite overwhelming evidence, modern Turkey continues to deny the facts of the genocide, honor the perpetrators of that crime against humanity as national heroes, and persecute its citizens who acknowledge or even allude to the **Armenian genocide**; and

WHEREAS, Each April, Armenians throughout the world honor their martyrs and commemorate the **Armenian genocide**, a term coined by scholar Raphael Lemkin in 1944, referencing the Armenian extermination as a seminal example of genocide; and

WHEREAS, We must all fight against current injustices, such as the ongoing first genocide of the 21st century in Darfur, which demonstrates how the cycle of genocide continues; and

WHEREAS, Ottoman Turkey's genocide, between 1915 and 1923, against its ancient Christian populations, including over 2 million Armenians, Assyrians, Pontian Greeks, and Syriacs, has left only a handful of Christian faithful to care for the vast religious heritage within modern Turkey that, to this day, continues to represent an integral part of these groups' Christian faith and cultural identity; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey, through neglect, theft, acts of violence, intolerance, and other means of denying basic human rights, has destroyed or stolen much of the Christian heritage within its borders, and has prevented the remaining Christians in its territory from freely practicing their faith; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in its annual report released in March of 2012, identified the Republic of Turkey as one of the 16 most egregious and systematic violators of religious freedom in the world; and

WHEREAS, We commend Armenians of Colorado, Inc., for their ongoing efforts to bring awareness and to educate the community, including our youth, about the **Armenian genocide** and the challenges facing minority populations in the Republic of Turkey by co-sponsoring, with Facing History and Ourselves, a teachers' workshop entitled "Why Studying

the **Armenian Genocide** Matters Today" with genocide scholar Peter Balakian on March 10, 2012; and

WHEREAS, We commend the growing number of Turkish citizens, including academics, writers, and journalists, who challenge their government's official account of history amid threats of prosecution and imprisonment under article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which forbids denigration of the Turkish nation and the Turkish government; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-eighth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

(1) That this legislative body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 97th anniversary of the **Armenian genocide**, to be recognized at a memorial service at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 22, 2012, at the Armenian Garden, located in the northeast quadrant on the State Capitol grounds;

(2) That we, the members of the General Assembly, hereby acknowledge April 24, 2012, and April 24 of each year hereafter, as "Colorado Day of Remembrance of the **Armenian Genocide**"; and

(3) That we ask the government of Turkey to honor its obligations under international treaties and human rights law to return all that has been confiscated and to compensate for all destroyed Christian properties and sacred sites, allow for the reconstruction and preservation of these properties, and allow the Christian minorities to practice and teach their religion as requested by Congressional House Resolution 306, overwhelmingly adopted in December 2011.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation; the members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues; the Honorable John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado; the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, D.C.; the Armenian National Committee of America in Washington, D.C.; the Armenian and Turkish Embassies in Washington, D.C.; the **Armenian Genocide** Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia; and Armenians of Colorado, Inc.

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LOAD-DATE: April 25, 2012