

State of Illinois
90th General Assembly
Legislation

90_HR0113

LRB9002710CBcbA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

1
2 WHEREAS, The United States has always been a haven for
3 the persecuted and oppressed, whether by reason of religion
4 or nationality; and

5 WHEREAS, We who cherish our freedom can never take it for
6 granted; we who respect justice can never be totally secure
7 in it; and

8 WHEREAS, When freedom is challenged anywhere, all
9 humankind must rise up in protest; we must all use our voices
10 and our influence to meet those challenges and help protect
11 individual life and liberty; and

12 WHEREAS, No other human rights violation deserves greater
13 protest and attention and demands firmer condemnation by
14 freedom-loving people than genocide; and

15 WHEREAS, For the Armenian people, the horror and
16 inhumanity of this devastating crime began in 1915 when young
17 men of Armenian origin were drafted into the Turkish army,
18 soon to be disarmed, transferred to labor battalions, and
19 then massacred; and

20 WHEREAS, On April 24, 1915, authorities of the Ottoman
21 Empire arrested the most prominent intellectuals and leaders
22 of Constantinople; they were exiled to the interior of
23 Anatolia, either perishing on the way or meeting their fate
24 on arrival; and

25 WHEREAS, The Armenians were rounded up, brutally driven
26 from their homes and their land, separated from families,
27 robbed of everything they owned, and stripped of possessions
28 they carried with them; and

29 WHEREAS, On a death march to Der-El-Zor, more than a
30 million died of starvation or were killed; thousands of

-2-

LRB9002710CBcbA

1 Christian Armenians were tortured and murdered for refusing
2 to accept Islam as their religion; the atrocities inflicted
3 on Armenians in concentration camps and on death marches to
4 Der-El-Zor in the Syrian desert resemble those of the
5 Holocaust of World War II; and

6 WHEREAS, During this act of genocide, 1.5 million people
7 of Armenian ancestry were victims from 1915 to 1923; at the
8 outbreak of World War I, the Young Turk regime decided to
9 deport the entire Armenian population of about 1.75 million
10 to Syrian and Mesopotamia; and

11 WHEREAS, Talaat Pasha, leader of the Young Turk movement,
12 was the principal author of the plan to exterminate the
13 Armenians; the plan of genocide consisted of deporting all
14 Armenians of whatever age or condition of health to the

15 totally barren Der-El-Zor region of what is now Syria; and
16 WHEREAS, The massacre of Armenians who remained in Turkey
17 was called the "most colossal crime of all ages" by the
18 examining American military mission's report to the United
19 States Congress; and

20 WHEREAS, In a telegram sent by U.S. Ambassador Henry
21 Morgenthau to the Secretary of State, Morgenthau warned that
22 "a campaign of race extermination is in progress under a
23 pretext of reprisal against rebellion"; and

24 WHEREAS, Each year, with solemn religious and patriotic
25 ceremony, Armenians in the international community honor
26 those who died in 1915 and remind all people that genocide on
27 any scale is a crime against all humanity; and

28 WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, when questioned as to the "final
29 solution" to the Jewish question, said, "Who remembers the
30 Armenians?"; and

31 WHEREAS, April 24, 1997 will be commemorated by Armenians
-3- LRB9002710CBcbA

1 in this country and throughout the world in remembrance of
2 the first instance of genocide in this century; and

3 WHEREAS, The People of Illinois, as represented by the
4 General Assembly and the Governor, should be mindful of these
5 tragic events, should further assure that no future tyrant
6 may ever ask the question asked by Hitler and should act in a
7 spirit of justice and humanity to designate April 24, 1997 as
8 Armenian Martyrs Day, a day of remembrance of man's
9 inhumanity to man; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
12 commemorate April 24, 1997 as a day of remembrance of the
13 82nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923; and
14 be it further

15 RESOLVED, That we call upon the people of Illinois to
16 observe that day by remembering the 1.5 million people of
17 Armenian ancestry who lost their lives during that terrible
18 time; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we request Governor Jim Edgar to proclaim
20 April 24, 1997 as a day of remembrance in honor of the
21 victims of the Armenian Genocide; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to Governor Jim Edgar.