

J05233 Text:

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 93rd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on Thursday, April 24, 2008

WHEREAS, This Resolution arises from a sense of human decency and respect for the Armenian people and their history; and

WHEREAS, Towards the end of the 19th Century, the Turkish Government began to systematically persecute their citizens of Armenian heritage; and

WHEREAS, From 1894 to 1896, Sultan Abdu-Hamid II ordered the massacre of 300,000 Armenians living within the boundaries of the Turkish Empire; and

WHEREAS, In 1909, 30,000 more Armenian men, women and children were slaughtered by Turkish armies in the mountain village of Cilicia; and

WHEREAS, Nonetheless, by the onset of World War I, there still remained 2,500,000 Armenians who made their homes within the Ottoman Empire; of these, over 250,000 were faithful soldiers who loyally fought within the ranks of its armies in an effort to defend their homeland; and

WHEREAS, On April 24, 1915, hundreds of Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were rounded up, exiled and eventually murdered in secret death camps hidden in mountainsides; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of the next six months, the Armenian soldiers on active duty in the army were disarmed and placed in forced labor battalions, whereupon many either starved or were summarily executed behind the fences of these camps; and

WHEREAS, Deprived of their leaders and the young men who could defend these helpless communities, the remaining Armenians became an easy target for the government raids and found themselves at the mercy of cruel and often barbaric persecutors; and

WHEREAS, A total of 1,500,000 Armenian men, women and children were massacred; 500,000 more were exiled; and 500,000 were able to escape the reign of terror and establish themselves in new foreign lands; as a result, today there are only 100,000 people of Armenian heritage left residing within the borders of modern Turkey; and

WHEREAS, The devastation which resulted from this "ethnic cleansing" practiced by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire occurred in a similar ratio to that caused by the Jewish Holocaust of the 1940s, yet most of the world's peoples do not realize the gravity of the Armenian genocide; and

WHEREAS, The Armenian people have been denied the right to self-determination on their ancestral lands; they have received no form of reparations for their tragic losses; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armenian community honor the memory of the victims of this genocide and emphasize that crimes against humanity must be condemned and never be allowed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 93rd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide to be recognized on Thursday, April 24, 2008; on Friday, April 25, 2008, Armenian Americans from throughout the Northeast will converge in New York City to commemorate the anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide; the day will commence with a commemoration ceremony at New York City Hall; this year's Keynote Speaker is Henry Theriault, Professor of philosophy; in addition, there will be a second convergence of Armenian Americans at Times Square in New York City on Sunday, April 27, 2008, to once again

commemorate the anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Resolution is intended to counter the tide of revisionist history which purports that the Armenian Genocide never took place; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Doug Geogorian, Chairman of the Armenian National Committee of New York and Kenneth V. Hachikian, Chairman of the Armenian National Committee.