



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, the Empire State is home to many ethnic communities whose members benefit from the freedom and democracy upon which our Nation was founded; as a global leader in many areas of basic human and social rights, New York State has a prominent role in acknowledging events in history -- many of them tragic and distressing -- that teach valuable lessons from which our greater society benefits; one such event is the Armenian Genocide, during which an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed; and

Whereas, Armenian immigration to New York State began in the 1830's and continued into the early 1900's with an influx of individuals and families hopeful of finding a new life; they were people with distinct language and culture who possessed solid character and were primarily of the Christian faith; many Armenians came to this country seeking freedom as the survivors of the 20th century's first genocide; and

Whereas, the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 was an organized campaign initiated by the Ottoman Turkish Government, which sought to deliberately exterminate Armenians by employing cruel and inhumane tactics; this documented mass killing contributed to modern society's understanding and use of the term "genocide"; as it occurred, the attack on Armenian civilians was widely noticed but largely unchecked by the world community, and it was a foreshadowing of subsequent acts of human tragedy, such as the Holocaust; and

Whereas, the results of this large-scale catastrophe were profound for all Armenians, especially the loss of a great deal of their ancestral land; the population, language and culture were near extinction and many Armenian people were separated and scattered to various parts of the world; today the nation of Armenia -- a proud democratic republic free of decades of Soviet influence and oppression -- occupies only a small part of its original territory; and

Whereas, attempts to deny, rebut or downplay the details of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 are unwelcome to freedom-loving citizens who are guided and strengthened by truth; the crime of denial is a subsequent transgression against Armenian Genocide martyrs and survivors, and directly counteracts the effort to promote greater understanding of this event; it is believed by many that acknowledgment and awareness of this shameful event will not only teach future generations, but also will help mankind prevent such crimes from being repeated; this concept is particularly important as our State works to instill in youth, a universal respect for other cultures, races, religions and viewpoints; and

Whereas, during the 85th anniversary of the onset of the Armenian Genocide, as the number of actual Genocide survivors diminishes with the passage of time, it is fitting that people worldwide join the Armenian-American community as it observes what is commonly referred to as Martyrs' Day; likewise, the people of New York State share in the solemn commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23, and join with the Armenian-American community and its many religious, communal and philanthropic organizations as they honor the sacrifices and memory of their noble ancestors;

Now, Therefore, I, George E. Pataki, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim April 24, 2000 as

ARMENIAN REMEMBRANCE DAY

in the Empire State.



G I V E N under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State

at the Capitol in the City of Albany this seventeenth day of

April in the year two thousand.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor