

2015-J4117

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 24, 2016, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the State of New York

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

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 24, 2016, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, During the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923, one million five hundred thousand men, women, and children of Armenian descent, and hundreds of thousands of Assyrian and Greek descent, lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish Empire in its attempt to systematically eliminate the Armenian race, while hundreds of thousands had become homeless and stateless refugees; and

WHEREAS, April 24, 1915, is globally observed as the commencement of the Armenian Genocide because the arrest on that day, and subsequent execution, of several hundred Armenian leaders alerted the world about the Ottoman Turks' genocidal plan; and

WHEREAS, Despite Armenians' historic presence, stewardship, and autonomy in the region, Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire subjected Armenians to severe and unjust persecution and brutality including widespread and wholesale massacres beginning in the 1890s, most notably the Hamidian Massacres from 1894 to 1896, and the Adana Massacre of 1909; and

WHEREAS, By 1923, these crimes against humanity not only resulted in the killing of unprecedented numbers of innocent people, but also had the consequence of permanently removing all traces of the Armenians and

other targeted peoples from their historic homelands of more than three millennia, and enriching the perpetrators with the lands and other property of the victims of these crimes, including the usurpation of several thousand churches; 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 history; and

WHEREAS, This Resolution declares that this Legislative Body deplors the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person, in this country or abroad, to deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, The failure of the international community to hold responsible nations accountable for crimes against humanity results in travesty of justice, and sets a negative precedent; and

WHEREAS, The United States is on record as having officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in the United States government's May 28, 1951, written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through President Ronald Reagan's April 22, 1981, Proclamation No. 4838, and by Congressional legislation including House of Representatives Joint Resolution 148 adopted on April 8, 1975, and House of Representatives Joint Resolution 247 adopted on September 10, 1984; and

WHEREAS, Even prior to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States has a record of having sought to justly and constructively address the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's intentional destruction of the Armenian people, includ-

ing through Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 adopted on February 9, 1916, Senate Resolution 359 adopted on May 11, 1920, and President Woodrow Wilson's November 22, 1920, decision entitled, "The Frontier between

Armenia and Turkey"; and

WHEREAS, On April 24, 2013, the President of the United States stated, "A full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts is in all of our interests. Nations grow stronger by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past, thereby building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future"; and

WHEREAS, President Obama entered office having stated his "firmly held conviction that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence" and affirmed his record of "calling for Turkey's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide"; and

WHEREAS, In response to the Genocide and at the behest of then President Woodrow Wilson and the U.S. State Department, the Near East Relief organization was founded and was provided unprecedented complete access to all U.S. government documents and files concerning the plight of Christian minorities; and

WHEREAS, Near East Relief was the first Congressionally-sanctioned American philanthropic effort created exclusively to rescue the Armenian Nation and other Christian minorities from annihilation after U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople Henry A. Morgenthau, Jr., pled for assistance upon personally witnessing the systematic massacre of Armenians; and

WHEREAS, Near East Relief's efforts resulted in delivering \$117 million of assistance between 1915 and 1930, including the delivery of food, clothing, and materials for shelter, setting up refugee camps, clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

WHEREAS, The generous philanthropy of the American people directly resulted in the salvation of the Armenian and Assyrian refugees nation from being completely annihilated by the Genocide by saving more than one million refugees, including more than 130,000 orphans through their humanitarian assistance; and

WHEREAS, Near East Relief evolved into the Near East Foundation in 1930, and continues to provide humanitarian aid to people throughout the Middle East and Africa; and

WHEREAS, New York is home to a vibrant Armenian-American community who have enriched our State through their leadership and contribution in

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business, agriculture, academia, government, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York endeavors to encourage and promote a curriculum relating to human rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to prevent the recurrence of genocide; and

WHEREAS, April 24, 2016, will mark the 101st Anniversary since the commencement of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, Armenians in New York, and throughout the world, have not been provided with justice for the crimes perpetrated against the Armenian nation despite the fact that a century has passed since the crimes were first committed; 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 memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 24, 2016, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.