

2023 -- S 0937

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING APRIL 24, 2023, AS "ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY"
TO COMMEMORATE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915 TO 1923, AND IN HONOR
OF ARMENIAN-AMERICANS

Introduced By: Senators Tikoian, Gallo, Raptakis, Ujifusa, F. Lombardi, Felag, Britto,
Cano, Zurier, and Mack

Date Introduced: April 25, 2023

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman
2 Empire from 1915 to 1923, and resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of
3 whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, and the remaining 500,000 survived but
4 were expelled from their homes. This act succeeded in the elimination of the Armenians from
5 their historic ancestral homeland where they had resided for over 2,500 years; and

6 WHEREAS, On May 24, 1915, for the first time ever, the Allied Powers of England,
7 France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging another government of
8 committing "a crime against humanity"; and

9 WHEREAS, This joint statement declared, "the Allied Governments announce publicly
10 to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of
11 the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres";
12 and

13 WHEREAS, United States Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. explicitly described the
14 policy of the Ottoman Empire's government to the United States Department of State as "a
15 campaign of race extermination," and on July 16, 1915, was informed by United States Secretary
16 of State Robert Lansing that the "Department approves your procedure . . . to stop Armenian
17 persecution"; and

18 WHEREAS, The post-World War I Turkish government indicted the top leaders involved
19 in the organization and execution of the Armenian Genocide and in the "massacre and destruction

1 of the Armenians," and in a series of court-martials, officials of the Young Turk regime were
2 charged, tried and convicted, for organizing and executing massacres against the Armenian
3 people; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Commission invoked the
5 Armenian Genocide as "precisely . . . one of the types of acts which the modern term 'crimes
6 against humanity' is intended to cover" as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals; and

7 WHEREAS, The United States National Archives and Record Administration holds
8 extensive and thorough documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially in its holdings
9 under Record Group 59 of the United States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40, which
10 are open and widely available to the public and interested institutions; and

11 WHEREAS, The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, an independent federal
12 agency, unanimously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memorial
13 Museum would include the Armenian Genocide in the museum and has since done so; and

14 WHEREAS, When one enters the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, there is an
15 exhibit depicting Adolf Hitler, who on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without
16 provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by stating "[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the
17 annihilation of the Armenians?", thus setting the stage for the Holocaust; and

18 WHEREAS, On April 24, 2021, United States President Joe Biden stated, "...we
19 remember the lives of all those who have died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and
20 recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring"; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1918, after the fall of the Russian Empire, the Azerbaijan Democratic
22 Republic and the First Republic of Armenia both declared independence; however, shortly
23 thereafter, they became part of the Soviet Union. The modern Republic of Azerbaijan once again
24 proclaimed its independence in August of 1991, shortly before the dissolution of the USSR.
25 Within its borders, however, the predominantly Armenian enclave known as the Republic of
26 Artsakh officially voted to become part of Armenia; and

27 WHEREAS, Azerbaijan sought to suppress the separatist movement, while Armenia
28 backed it. Turkey has close ties to Azerbaijan and was the first nation to recognize Azerbaijan's
29 independence in 1991. In 1993, Turkey, in addition to engaging in numerous hostilities, shut its
30 border with Armenia in support of Azerbaijan during the war over the Republic of Artsakh; and

31 WHEREAS, In Turkey's continuing aggression and genocide of Armenians that began
32 more than 100 years ago, the 2020 unprovoked war between Azerbaijan, with military support
33 provided by Turkey, and the Republic of Artsakh has resulted in Artsakh being forced to return
34 many of the surrounding territories it had occupied for millennia; and

1 WHEREAS, Beginning in May of 2021, Azerbaijan has been making armed incursions
2 into, and taking lands within, Armenian's internationally recognized borders including in the
3 Syunik and Gegharkunik provinces; and

4 WHEREAS, In March through early April of 2022, following several days of escalated
5 tensions, Azerbaijan's military open fired on Armenian military posts along the western part of
6 the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, and days later, shelled various villages, mostly located along the
7 eastern border of Artsakh; and

8 WHEREAS, Currently, there are no diplomatic relations between Armenia and
9 Azerbaijan, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has continued to ignite clashes and casualties as
10 recently as March of 2023; now, therefor be it

11 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby recognizes April 24,
12 2023, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests the President of the United
14 States and the United States Congress to call on the government of Turkey to face history and
15 acknowledge this crime of genocide committed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, and urge the
16 Turkish government to make restitution for the loss of lives, confiscated properties, and general
17 unlawful deportations, separating the indigenous population from their homeland; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate expresses its deepest sympathy to the Armenian-American
20 community of Rhode Island and assures them that this genocide will always be commemorated
21 and never forgotten; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Joseph Biden, President of the
24 United States, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, the Governor of the State of Rhode
25 Island, the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, and the Armenian National
26 Committee in Washington.

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