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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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SENATE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING "HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY" AND "ARMENIAN  
GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY" AND AVOWING THAT THESE ATROCITIES  
SHALL NEVER BE REPEATED

Introduced By: Senators Gallo, Goodwin, Miller, Ruggerio, and Goldin

Date Introduced: April 27, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island has consistently demonstrated its concerns and  
2 interests regarding raising awareness on the subjects of Holocaust and Genocide, and the  
3 necessity for civic education, of which Genocide education should be a component; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2016, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Armenian  
5 community spearheaded the drive to amend the Rhode Island General Laws in order to require  
6 more comprehensive and inclusive educational requirements on the subjects of Holocaust and  
7 Genocide; and

8 WHEREAS, Resultantly, House Bill 7488 SUB A was passed by the General Assembly  
9 and subsequently signed into law on June 17, 2016; and

10 WHEREAS, The legislation requires the Rhode Island Board of Education to include  
11 instruction on the subjects of Holocaust and Genocide studies in an appropriate place in the  
12 curriculum, for all middle and high school students; and

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

18 WHEREAS, United States Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. explicitly described the  
19 policy of the Ottoman Empire's government to the United States Department of State as "a

1 campaign of race extermination." The post-World War I Turkish government indicted the top  
2 leaders involved in the organization and execution of the Armenian Genocide and in the  
3 "massacre and destruction of the Armenians," and in a series of court-martials, officials of the  
4 Young Turk regime were charged, tried and convicted, for organizing and executing massacres  
5 against the Armenian people; and

6 WHEREAS, Holocaust is the term used to refer to the period in world history from 1933  
7 to 1945, before and during World War II, when Adolf Hitler and the Nazis systematically and  
8 barbarically persecuted and murdered nearly six million Jews and another five million non-Jews  
9 throughout Europe because they were perceived to be "racially inferior" and "life unworthy of  
10 life"; and

11 WHEREAS, The infamous and brutal killing grounds of Auschwitz, Buchenwald,  
12 Dachau and Belson, today house the unnatural quiet and ghostly calm of somber rows of sanitized  
13 barracks and rusting ovens, and stand as speechless memorials to the six million Jews and eleven  
14 million total victims who succumbed to the deliberate Nazi program of Genocide that was the  
15 Holocaust; and

16 WHEREAS, This year marks the 102nd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide  
17 committed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, and the 74th Anniversary of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto  
18 Uprising; and

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

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

26 WHEREAS, The citizens of Rhode Island, having our own rich heritage of resistance and  
27 intolerance for those who would trample individual liberty and dignity, applaud the courageous  
28 efforts of the Armenians in their brave fight for their survival and their ancestral homeland and  
29 the valiant efforts of ghetto residents for whom day to day survival was a relentless struggle. The  
30 brave actions of the Armenian and Jewish people stand as testimony to a rare and indomitable  
31 human spirit and extraordinary courage exhibited in the darkest hours of man's inhumanity; and

32 WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders and people of all nations must take the time to remember  
33 and educate their youth about the millions of men, women and children who were slaughtered  
34 simply because of their beliefs and their heritage, or their strengths or their frailties, and we must

1 firmly avow that the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust will never be  
2 repeated; now, therefore be it

3           RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
4 hereby commemorates "Holocaust Remembrance Day" and "Armenian Genocide Remembrance  
5 Day"; and be it further

6           RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby expresses its deepest sympathy to the Jewish-  
7 American and Armenian-American communities of Rhode Island and thanks them for their  
8 efforts to assure that these atrocious and unconscionable events will always be commemorated  
9 and never forgotten by future generations; and be it further

10           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
11 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Donald Trump, President of the  
12 United States, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, and the Honorable Gina Raimondo,  
13 Governor of the State of Rhode Island.

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