

**First Regular Session
Seventy-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R21-0962.01 Shannon Wheeler x4340

SJR21-017

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21-017

101 **CONCERNING THE "COLORADO DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE**
102 **ARMENIAN GENOCIDE" ON APRIL 26, 2021.**

1 WHEREAS, This year marks the 106th anniversary of the first
2 genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian genocide, when 1.5 million
3 men, women, and children of Armenian descent were victims of a brutal
4 genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, As a result, there are fewer than 75,000 indigenous
7 Armenians living within the borders of modern Turkey today; and

8 WHEREAS, The contemporary United States Ambassador to the
9 Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated in 1915, "Whatever
10 crimes the most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most debased
2 imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes of this devoted
3 people."; and

4 WHEREAS, The killing of the Armenian people was followed by
5 the systematic destruction of many of the world's oldest churches,
6 cathedrals, and cross-stones, as well as schools, libraries, treasures of art,
7 and cultural monuments that continues to this day in an attempt to
8 eliminate all traces of a noble civilization with a history of more than
9 3,000 years; and

10 WHEREAS, Colorado newspapers widely reported the
11 extermination of the Armenian people, and Colorado communities
12 generously raised funds to assist the survivors, known at that time as the
13 "Starving Armenians", as illustrated in the January 16, 1919, Denver Post
14 front-page story titled "Campaign for Armenian Relief is Making
15 Splendid Headway" and a July 30, 1922, Denver Post front-page story
16 titled "\$60,000,000 from U.S. Keeps Armenians from Extinction"; and

17 WHEREAS, In response to the genocide and at the behest of
18 President Woodrow Wilson and the U.S. State Department, the Near East
19 Relief organization was founded and became the first congressionally
20 sanctioned American philanthropic effort created exclusively to provide
21 humanitarian assistance and rescue the Armenian Nation and other
22 Christian minorities from annihilation, and many of those rescued went
23 on to survive, revive, and thrive outside of their ancestral homeland all
24 over the world and specifically in the state of Colorado; and

25 WHEREAS, Near East Relief succeeded, with the active
26 participation of many Coloradans, including Governor Oliver Shoup, who
27 concurrently served as Colorado State Chairman for Near East Relief, in
28 delivering \$117 million of assistance and saving more than one million
29 refugees, including 132,000 orphans, between 1915 and 1930 by
30 delivering food, clothing, and materials for shelter and setting up refugee
31 camps, clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

32 WHEREAS, Turkey's ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide
33 paved the way for another tragedy in late 2020, when Turkey-aided
34 Azerbaijan invaded the Republic of Artsakh, a region of the Armenian
35 homeland, in an onslaught that, despite a cease-fire announcement,
36 continues to this day through Azerbaijan's unwillingness to release nearly
37 200 Armenian Prisoners of War, forbiddance of the return of Armenian

1 refugees to Hadrut and other occupied regions of Artsakh, and refusal of
2 international missions to monitor the nearly 1,500 antique and medieval
3 Armenian cultural sites that have recently come under Azerbaijan's
4 control; and

5 WHEREAS, Each April, Armenians throughout the world honor
6 their martyrs and commemorate the Armenian genocide, a term first used
7 by Raphael Lemkin, the legal scholar who coined the word "genocide"
8 and drafted the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and
9 Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, explaining on CBS television in
10 1949 that he "became interested in genocide because it happened to the
11 Armenians; and . . . their criminals . . . were not punished"; and

12 WHEREAS, We commend Armenians of Colorado, Inc., the
13 Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action, and other human
14 rights organizations for their ongoing efforts to bring awareness and to
15 educate the community, including our youth, about the Armenian
16 genocide, as illustrated in the production of Emmy-winning composer
17 Denise Gentilini's I AM ALIVE musical; now, therefore,

18 *Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-third General*
19 *Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives*
20 *concurring herein:*

21 (1) That we pause in our deliberations to commemorate the 106th
22 anniversary of the Armenian genocide, which will be formally recognized
23 at a memorial service at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, 2021, at the
24 Armenian Garden, established in 1982 in the northeast quadrant on the
25 State Capitol grounds with a memorial plaque, and renovated and
26 renewed in 2015 with the addition of the khachkar memorial, a replica of
27 a destroyed medieval Armenian headstone;

28 (2) That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly,
29 hereby acknowledge April 26, 2021, and April 26 of each year thereafter,
30 as "Colorado Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide"; and

31 (3) That we express support for efforts toward constructive and
32 durable relations between the country of Armenia, the homeland for the
33 Armenian people, and its neighbors, based upon acknowledgment of the
34 facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian genocide, and a fair,
35 just, and comprehensive international resolution of this crime against
36 humanity.

1 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
2 to the Armenians of Colorado and former State Representative Cole Wist.