



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21-017

BY SENATOR(S) Moreno, Bridges, Buckner, Coleman, Cooke, Coram, Danielson, Donovan, Fenberg, Fields, Gardner, Ginal, Gonzales, Hansen, Hisey, Jaquez Lewis, Kirkmeyer, Kolker, Lee, Liston, Lundeen, Pettersen, Priola, Rodriguez, Scott, Smallwood, Sonnenberg, Story, Winter, Woodward, Zenzinger, Garcia;

also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Esgar, Amabile, Bacon, Baisley, Benavidez, Bennett, Bird, Bockenfeld, Bradfield, Caraveo, Carver, Catlin, Cutter, Daugherty, Duran, Exum, Froelich, Geitner, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Gray, Hanks, Herod, Holtorf, Hooton, Jodeh, Kennedy, Kipp, Larson, Lontine, Luck, Lynch, McCluskie, McCormick, McKean, McLachlan, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Neville, Ortiz, Pelton, Pico, Ransom, Rich, Ricks, Roberts, Sandridge, Sirota, Snyder, Soper, Sullivan, Tipper, Titone, Valdez A., Van Beber, Van Winkle, Weissman, Will, Williams, Woodrow, Woog, Young, Garnett.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The contemporary United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated in 1915, "Whatever crimes the most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, and whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes of this devoted people."; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Turkey's ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide paved the way for another tragedy in late 2020, when Turkey-aided Azerbaijan invaded the Republic of Artsakh, a region of the Armenian homeland, in an onslaught that, despite a cease-fire announcement, continues to this day through Azerbaijan's unwillingness to release nearly 200 Armenian Prisoners of War, forbiddance of the return of Armenian refugees to Hadrut and other occupied regions of Artsakh, and refusal of international missions to monitor the nearly 1,500 antique and medieval

Armenian cultural sites that have recently come under Azerbaijan's control; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Leroy M. Garcia  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE SENATE

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Alec Garnett  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Cindi L. Markwell  
SECRETARY OF  
THE SENATE

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Robin Jones  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES