

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 96

Introduced by Assembly Members Fuentes, Achadjian and Gatto
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Block, Charles
Calderon, Gordon, Hall, Jeffries, Pan, and Williams)
(Coauthors: Senators Cannella, Correa, and Rubio)

January 30, 2012

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 96—Relative to the California Day of Remembrance for the Massacres of Armenians in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 96, as introduced, Fuentes. California Day of Remembrance for the Massacres of Armenians.

This measure would designate February 27, 2012, as California Day of Remembrance for the Massacres of Armenians in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku, and would call upon the people of California to use vigilance to promote greater tolerance in Azerbaijan and ensure the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict while protecting the security of the Armenians in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, During the seven decades of the USSR's existence,
- 2 the government of Soviet Azerbaijan conducted a systematic policy
- 3 of removal of Karabakh Armenians from their historic homeland;
- 4 and
- 5 WHEREAS, In the days before the Sumgait massacre,
- 6 Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous region that
- 7 Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had arbitrarily severed from Armenia

1 and forced under Soviet Azerbaijani administration, had been
2 peacefully demonstrating against decades of Soviet Azerbaijani
3 repression and discrimination; and

4 WHEREAS, In spite of an attempted press blackout by Soviet
5 authorities, reports from the Financial Times (March 16, 1988)
6 and the New York Times (May 22, 1988) noted Armenians being
7 “hunted” down and killed in their homes in Sumgait; and

8 WHEREAS, The New York Times reported on April 27, 1988,
9 that “[h]uge, peaceful street demonstrations were followed by a
10 rampage of anti-Armenian violence in Sumgait ...”; and

11 WHEREAS, Within months of the Sumgait massacres, the
12 United States Senate unanimously passed Amendment 2690 to the
13 Fiscal Year 1989 Foreign Operations Appropriation bill (H.R.
14 4782) in July 1988, concerning the Karabakh conflict and calling
15 on the Soviet government to “respect the legitimate aspirations of
16 the Armenian people ...” and noted that “dozens of Armenians
17 have been killed and hundreds injured during the recent unrests
18 ...”; and

19 WHEREAS, Sumgait was followed by anti-Armenian massacres
20 and deportations in Kirovabad (November 21-27, 1988) and in
21 Baku (January 13-19, 1990), leading to the deportation of over
22 350,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan; and

23 WHEREAS, As a result of the Baku massacres, United States
24 Senator Pete Wilson (CA-R) along with his United States Senate
25 colleagues sent a letter to then Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev
26 stating, “we are deeply concerned about the murders, tortures, and
27 property destruction that the Armenian community of Baku has
28 suffered over the past six days as a result of attacks by organized
29 groups of Azerbaijanis ...” and noted that “the horrifying upsurge
30 of violence in Azerbaijan only dramatizes the need for the Soviet
31 Government to insure that the 160,000 residents of the enclave of
32 Nagorno Karabakh can exercise their autonomy by reuniting with
33 Soviet Armenia”; and

34 WHEREAS, The Azerbaijani government continues to threaten
35 war against the people of Nagorno Karabakh; and

36 WHEREAS, Armenians in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic
37 remain at risk of yet another genocide until the time when a
38 peaceful resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is reached
39 that guarantees the freedom and security for these people while
40 supporting their right to self-determination; and

1 WHEREAS, California is home to the largest Armenian
2 American population in the United States, which includes survivors
3 of these massacres and refugees from Azerbaijan, and this
4 community living in California has enriched our state through their
5 leadership in business, agriculture, academia, government, and the
6 arts; and

7 WHEREAS, Recognition of these instances of man’s inhumanity
8 to man is crucial to ensuring against the repetition of such acts and
9 provides the American public with a greater understanding of its
10 heritage; now, therefore, be it

11 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
12 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature of the State of California
13 hereby designates February 27, 2012, as “California Day of
14 Remembrance for the Massacres of Armenians in Sumgait,
15 Kirovabad, and Baku”; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the people of California are called upon to use
17 vigilance to promote greater tolerance in Azerbaijan and ensure
18 the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict while
19 protecting the security of the Armenians in the Nagorno Karabakh
20 Republic; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
22 of this resolution to the Governor and to the Armenian National
23 Committee of America-Western Region.