

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 1

Introduced by Assembly Member Gatto

December 1, 2014

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 1—Relative to the Armenian Genocide.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 1, as introduced, Gatto. Armenian Genocide.

This measure would designate the week of April 18 to 24, 2015, as “California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923,” commemorate the week of remembrance through the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Project, call upon Congress and the President of the United States to recognize the atrocities committed against the Armenian people, and call upon the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge the facts of the Armenian Genocide and work toward a just resolution.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923 was the
2 first genocide of the 20th century, in which 1.5 million men,
3 women, and children lost their lives at the hands of the Turkish
4 Ottoman Empire in their attempt to systematically eliminate the
5 Armenian race; and

6 WHEREAS, In their 3,000 year historic homeland in Asia
7 Minor, Armenians were subjected to severe and unjust persecution
8 and brutality by the Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire before
9 and after the turn of the 20th century, including widespread acts

1 of destruction and murder during the period from 1894 to 1896,
2 inclusive, and again in 1909; and

3 WHEREAS, The massacre of the Armenians constituted one of
4 the most atrocious violations of human rights in the history of the
5 world; and

6 WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, in persuading his army commanders
7 that the merciless persecution and killing of Jews, Poles, and other
8 people would bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks
9 today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”; and

10 WHEREAS, Unlike other people and governments that have
11 admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor
12 regimes, and despite the overwhelming proof of genocidal intent,
13 the Republic of Turkey has inexplicably and adamantly denied the
14 occurrence of the crimes against humanity committed by the
15 Ottoman and Young Turk rulers, and those denials compound the
16 grief of the few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate
17 the memory of the victims, and cause continuing pain to the
18 descendants of the victims; and

19 WHEREAS, Leaders of nations with strategic, commercial, and
20 cultural ties to the Republic of Turkey should be reminded of their
21 duty to encourage Turkish officials to cease efforts to distort facts
22 and deny the history of events surrounding the Armenian Genocide;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, The determination of those who continue to speak
25 the truth about the Armenian Genocide is tested to this day with
26 some of these speakers of truth being silenced by violent means;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The accelerated level and scope of denial and
29 revisionism, coupled with the passage of time and the fact that
30 very few survivors remain who can serve as reminders of
31 indescribable brutality and tormented lives, compel a sense of
32 urgency in efforts to solidify recognition of historical truth; and

33 WHEREAS, By consistently remembering and forcefully
34 condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians, and
35 honoring the survivors as well as other victims of similar heinous
36 conduct, we guard against repetition of such acts of genocide and
37 provide the American public with a greater understanding of its
38 heritage; and

39 WHEREAS, This measure would provide that the Legislature
40 deplores the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person in this

1 country or abroad to deny the historical fact of the Armenian
2 Genocide; and

3 WHEREAS, California is home to the largest
4 Armenian-American population in the United States, and
5 Armenians living in California have enriched our state through
6 their leadership in business, agriculture, academia, government,
7 and the arts; and

8 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront
9 of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human
10 rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to
11 prevent recurrence of the crime of genocide; and

12 WHEREAS, On this hundred-year anniversary marking the start
13 of this horrific and shameful chapter in human history, we stop to
14 reflect on the time that has passed and pledge not to become
15 complacent in our vigilance against those entities who would
16 commit such horrible acts against their fellow men and women;
17 now, therefore, be it

18 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
19 *California, jointly,* That the State of California commends its
20 conscientious educators who teach about human rights and
21 genocide; and be it further

22 *Resolved,* That the Legislature of the State of California hereby
23 designates the week of April 18 to 24, 2015, as “California Week
24 of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and
25 be it further

26 *Resolved,* That California commemorates California Week of
27 Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide through the Armenian
28 Genocide Commemorative Project; and be it further

29 *Resolved,* That the State of California respectfully calls upon
30 the Congress and the President of the United States to act likewise
31 and to formally and consistently recognize and reaffirm the
32 historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian
33 people constituted genocide; and be it further

34 *Resolved,* That the Legislature calls upon the Republic of Turkey
35 to acknowledge the facts of the Armenian Genocide and to work
36 toward a just resolution; and be it further

37 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
38 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
39 States, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of
40 Representatives, the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the

- 1 Senate, each member of the California delegation to the United
- 2 States Congress, the Governor, and the Turkish Ambassador to
- 3 the United States.

O