

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 21

Introduced by Assembly Member Gatto

January 4, 2012

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 21—Relative to the Armenian Genocide.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 21, as introduced, Gatto. Armenian Genocide.

This measure would designate the week of April 18 to 24, 2012, as “California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923,” and would memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to observe the California Week of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide by participating in the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Project.

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; and
5 WHEREAS, In their 3,000 year historic homeland in Asia
6 Minor, Armenians were subjected to severe and unjust persecution
7 and brutality by the Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire before
8 and after the turn of the 20th century, including widespread acts
9 of destruction and murder during the period from 1894 to 1896,
10 inclusive, and again in 1909; and

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

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

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

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

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

27 WHEREAS, By consistently remembering and forcefully
28 condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians, and
29 honoring the survivors as well as other victims of similar heinous
30 conduct, we guard against repetition of such acts of genocide and
31 provide the American public with a greater understanding of its
32 heritage; and

33 WHEREAS, This measure would provide that the Legislature
34 deplores the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person in this
35 country or abroad to deny the historical fact of the Armenian
36 Genocide; and

37 WHEREAS, California is home to the largest
38 Armenian-American population in the United States, and
39 Armenians living in California have enriched our state through

1 their leadership in business, agriculture, academia, government,
2 and the arts; and

3 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront
4 of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human
5 rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to
6 prevent recurrence of the crime of genocide; now, therefore, be it

7 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
8 *California, jointly,* That the State of California commends its
9 conscientious educators who teach about human rights and
10 genocide; and be it further

11 *Resolved,* That the Legislature of the State of California hereby
12 designates the week of April 18 to 24, 2012, as “California Week
13 of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and
14 be it further

15 *Resolved,* That California commemorates California Week of
16 Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide through the Armenian
17 Genocide Commemorative Project; and be it further

18 *Resolved,* That the State of California respectfully calls upon
19 the Congress and the President of the United States to act likewise
20 and to formally and consistently recognize and reaffirm the
21 historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian
22 people constituted genocide; and be it further

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

26 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
27 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
28 States, Members of the United States Congress, the Governor, and
29 the Turkish Ambassador to the United States.