



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 11-035

BY SENATOR(S) Tochtrop, Aguilar, Bacon, Boyd, Brophy, Cadman, Carroll, Foster, Giron, Grantham, Guzman, Harvey, Heath, Hodge, Hudak, Jahn, Johnston, King K., King S., Kopp, Lambert, Lundberg, Mitchell, Morse, Newell, Nicholson, Renfroe, Scheffel, Schwartz, Shaffer B., Spence, Steadman, White, Williams S.;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Ryden, Acree, Barker, Baumgardner, Beezley, Bradford, Brown, Casso, Conti, DelGrosso, Duran, Ferrandino, Fields, Gardner B., Gardner D., Gerou, Hamner, Hullinghorst, Jones, Joshi, Kagan, Kerr A., Kerr J., Lee, Levy, Looper, Massey, McCann, McKinley, Miklosi, Murray, Nikkel, Pabon, Pace, Priola, Riesberg, Schafer S., Scott, Solano, Soper, Stephens, Summers, Swalm, Swerdfeger, Szabo, Tyler, Vaad, Vigil, Waller, Williams A., McNulty.

CONCERNING REMEMBRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ON APRIL 24, 2011, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, DESIGNATING EVERY APRIL 24 HEREAFTER AS "COLORADO DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE".

WHEREAS, This year marks the 96th 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, as a result, there are fewer than 75,000 indigenous Armenians living within the borders of modern Turkey; and

WHEREAS, The former United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated, "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 churches, 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, In 2009, The New York Times reported on a newly exposed official Ottoman document revealing that 972,000 Armenians disappeared from population records within one year; and

WHEREAS, Despite overwhelming evidence, modern Turkey continues to deny and distort the facts of the genocide, honor the perpetrators of that crime against humanity as national heroes, and persecute its citizens who acknowledge or even allude to the Armenian genocide; and

WHEREAS, Each April, Armenians throughout the world honor their martyrs, and all the world's people should commemorate the Armenian genocide and condemn any attempt to deny its historical truth or mischaracterize it as anything less than genocide, a term coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 referencing the Armenian extermination as a seminal example of genocide; and

WHEREAS, We must all fight against current injustices, such as the ongoing first genocide of the 21st century in Darfur that is being denied by the Turkish government, an ally of the Sudanese regime, which demonstrates how the cycle of genocide continues; and

WHEREAS, We remain concerned about the welfare of Christian communities within Turkey, the rights of Christians living in Turkey to freely worship and practice their faith, and the legal status and condition of Christian churches, monasteries, schools, monuments, relics, holy sites, places of worship, and other religious properties in Turkey; and

WHEREAS, Ottoman Turkey's genocide, between 1915 and 1923, against its ancient Christian populations, including over two million Armenians, Assyrians, Pontian Greeks, and Syriacs, has left only a handful of Christian faithful to care for the vast religious heritage within modern Turkey that, to this day, continues to represent an integral part of these groups' Christian faith and cultural identity; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey, through neglect, theft, acts of violence, intolerance, and other means of denying basic human rights, has destroyed or stolen much of the Christian heritage within its borders; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey, through official and unofficial acts of discrimination, intolerance, and intimidation, has prevented the remaining Christians in its territory from freely practicing their faith; and

WHEREAS, We commend Armenians of Colorado, Inc., for their ongoing efforts to bring awareness and educate the community at large and the student population of Colorado about the Armenian genocide and the challenges facing the minority population in the Republic of Turkey; and

WHEREAS, We commend the growing number of Turkish citizens, including academics, writers, and journalists, who challenge their government's official account of history amid threats of prosecution and imprisonment under article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which forbids denigration of the Turkish nation and the Turkish government; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-eighth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

(1) That this legislative body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, to be recognized at a memorial service at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 23, 2011, at the Armenian genocide memorial plaque in the Armenian Garden, located in the northeast quadrant on the State Capitol grounds;

(2) That we, the members of the General Assembly, hereby acknowledge April 24, 2011, and April 24 of each year hereafter, as "Colorado Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide"; and

(3) That we ask the government of Turkey to honor its obligations under international treaties and human rights law to return all that has been confiscated and compensate for all destroyed Christian churches, monasteries, schools, monuments, holy sites, places of worship, and other religious properties, including movable properties such as artwork, manuscripts, and other artifacts, to their rightful owners; to allow the

rightful Christian church and lay owners of these properties to preserve, reconstruct, and repair all such properties; and to allow them to freely, and without hindrance or restriction, organize prayer, worship, education, religious community gatherings, ministry to the needs of the poor and infirm, and other activities in all Christian churches, monasteries, schools, monuments, holy sites, places of worship, and other religious properties within Turkey.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the members of the Colorado Congressional delegation; the members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues; the Honorable John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado; the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, D.C.; the Armenian National Committee in Washington, D.C.; and the Armenian and Turkish Embassies in Washington, D.C.

Brandon C. Shaffer
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Frank McNulty
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Cindi Markwell
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES