

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 27**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Nazarian**

*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bennett, Berman, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chen, Choi, Cooper, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Mike Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Gray, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wilson, and Wood)*

February 18, 2022

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 27—Relative to the Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Genocide.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 27, as introduced, Nazarian. Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Genocide.

This measure would, among other things, recognize April 24, 2022, as “State of California Day of Commemoration of the 107th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923,” and would call upon the President of the United States and the United States Congress to formally and consistently reaffirm the historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people constituted genocide.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Armenians have resided in Asia Minor and the  
2 Caucasus for approximately four millennia, and have a long and  
3 rich history in the region, including the establishment of many  
4 kingdoms, and despite Armenians' historic presence, stewardship,  
5 and autonomy in the region, Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire  
6 and the Republic of Turkey subjected Armenians to severe and  
7 unjust persecution and brutality, including wholesale massacres  
8 beginning in the 1890s; and

9 WHEREAS, The Armenian nation was subjected to a systematic  
10 and premeditated genocide officially beginning on April 24, 1915,  
11 at the hands of the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire  
12 from 1915 to 1919, inclusive, and continued at the hands of the  
13 Kemalist Movement of Turkey from 1920 to 1923, inclusive,  
14 whereby over 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children  
15 were slaughtered or marched to their deaths in an effort to  
16 annihilate the Armenian nation in the first genocide of modern  
17 times, while thousands of surviving Armenian women and children  
18 were forcibly converted and Islamized, and hundreds of thousands  
19 more were subjected to ethnic cleansing during the period of the  
20 modern Republic of Turkey from 1924 to 1937, inclusive; and

21 WHEREAS, During the genocides of the Christians living in  
22 the Ottoman Empire and surrounding regions, which occurred  
23 during the first half of the 20th century, 1.5 million men, women,  
24 and children of Armenian descent, and hundreds of thousands of  
25 Assyrians, Greeks, and other Christians, lost their lives at the hands  
26 of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the Republic of Turkey,  
27 constituting one of the most atrocious violations of human rights  
28 in the history of the world; and

29 WHEREAS, These crimes against humanity also had the  
30 consequence of permanently removing all traces of the Armenians  
31 and other targeted people from their historic homelands of more  
32 than four millennia and enriching the perpetrators with the lands  
33 and other property of the victims of these crimes, including the  
34 usurpation of several thousand churches; and

35 WHEREAS, In response to the genocide and at the behest of  
36 President Woodrow Wilson and the United States Department of  
37 State, the Near East Relief organization was founded and became  
38 the first congressionally sanctioned American philanthropic effort  
39 created exclusively to provide humanitarian assistance and rescue  
40 to the Armenian nation and other Christian minorities from

1 annihilation, who went on to survive and thrive outside of their  
2 ancestral homeland all over the world and specifically in this state;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Near East Relief succeeded, with the active  
5 participation of the citizens from this state, in delivering \$117  
6 million in assistance, and saving more than one million refugees,  
7 including 132,000 orphans, between 1915 and 1930, by delivering  
8 food, clothing, and materials for shelter, setting up refugee camps,  
9 clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

10 WHEREAS, The Armenian nation survived the genocide despite  
11 the attempt by the Ottoman Empire to exterminate it; and

12 WHEREAS, Adolf Hitler, in persuading his army commanders  
13 that the merciless persecution and killing of Jews, Poles, and other  
14 people would bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks  
15 today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”; and

16 WHEREAS, On November 4, 1918, immediately after the  
17 collapse of the Young Turk regime and before the founding of the  
18 Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923, the  
19 Ottoman Parliament considered a motion on the crimes committed  
20 by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) stating: “A  
21 population of one million people guilty of nothing except belonging  
22 to the Armenian nation were massacred and exterminated,  
23 including even women and children.” The Minister of Interior at  
24 the time, Fethi Bey, responded by telling the Parliament: “It is the  
25 intention of the government to cure every single injustice done up  
26 until now, as far as the means allow, to make possible the return  
27 to their homes of those sent into exile, and to compensate for their  
28 material loss as far as possible”; and

29 WHEREAS, On August 1, 1926, in an interview published in  
30 the Los Angeles Examiner, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk admitted:  
31 “These left-overs from the former Young Turk Party, who should  
32 have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian  
33 subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse, from their homes  
34 and massacred, have been restive under the Republican rule. They  
35 have hitherto lived on plunder, robbery and bribery and become  
36 inimical to any idea or suggestion to enlist in useful labor and earn  
37 their living by the honest sweat of their brow”; and

38 WHEREAS, The Parliamentary Investigative Committee  
39 proceeded to collect relevant documents describing the actions of  
40 those responsible for the Armenian mass killings and turned them

1 over to the Turkish Military Tribunal. CUP's leading figures were  
2 found guilty of massacring Armenians and hanged or given lengthy  
3 prison sentences. The Turkish Military Tribunal requested that  
4 Germany extradite to Turkey the masterminds of the massacres  
5 who had fled the country. After German refusal, they were tried  
6 in absentia and sentenced to death; and

7 WHEREAS, Unlike other people and governments that have  
8 admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor  
9 regimes, and despite the Turkish government's earlier admissions  
10 and the overwhelming proof of genocidal intent, the Republic of  
11 Turkey inexplicably and adamantly has denied the occurrence of  
12 the crimes against humanity committed by the Ottoman and Young  
13 Turk rulers for many years, and continues to do so a full century  
14 since the first crimes constituting genocide occurred; and

15 WHEREAS, Those denials compound the grief of the few  
16 remaining survivors and deprive the surviving Armenian nation  
17 of its individual and collective ancestral lands, property, cultural  
18 heritage, financial assets, and population growth; and

19 WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey has escalated its  
20 international campaign of Armenian Genocide denial, maintained  
21 its blockade of Armenia, and increased its pressure on the small  
22 but growing movement in Turkey acknowledging the Armenian  
23 Genocide and seeking justice for this systematic campaign of  
24 destruction of millions of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and other  
25 Christians upon their biblical-era homelands; and

26 WHEREAS, Those citizens of Turkey, both Armenian and  
27 non-Armenian, who continue to speak the truth about the Armenian  
28 Genocide, such as human rights activist and journalist Hrant Dink,  
29 continue to be silenced by violent means; and

30 WHEREAS, There is continued concern about the welfare of  
31 Christians in the Republic of Turkey, their right to worship and  
32 practice freely, and the legal status and condition of thousands of  
33 ancient Armenian churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and other  
34 historical and cultural structures, sites, and antiquities in the  
35 Republic of Turkey; and

36 WHEREAS, The United States is on record as having officially  
37 recognized the Armenian Genocide in the United States  
38 government's May 28, 1951, written statement to the International  
39 Court of Justice regarding the Reservations to the Convention on  
40 the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through

1 President Ronald Reagan’s April 22, 1981, Proclamation No. 4838,  
2 and by congressional legislation including House Joint Resolution  
3 148 adopted on April 9, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247  
4 adopted on September 12, 1984; and

5 WHEREAS, Prior to the Convention on the Prevention and  
6 Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States had a  
7 record of seeking just and constructive means to address the  
8 consequences of the Ottoman Empire’s intentional destruction of  
9 the Armenian people, including through United States Senate  
10 Concurrent Resolution 12 adopted on February 9, 1916, United  
11 States Senate Resolution 359 adopted on May 11, 1920, and  
12 President Woodrow Wilson’s November 22, 1920, decision titled,  
13 “The Frontier between Armenia and Turkey,” which was issued  
14 as a binding arbitral award, yet has not been enforced to this date  
15 despite its legally binding status; and

16 WHEREAS, President Barack Obama entered office “calling  
17 for Turkey’s acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide” and on  
18 April 24, 2013, and similarly on April 24, 2014, he further stated,  
19 “A full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts is in all of  
20 our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger, and build a more  
21 just and tolerant future, by acknowledging and reckoning with  
22 painful elements of the past”; and

23 WHEREAS, California is home to the largest Armenian  
24 American population in the United States, and Armenians living  
25 in California have enriched our state through their leadership and  
26 contribution in business, agriculture, academia, government, and  
27 the arts, many of whom have family members who experienced  
28 firsthand the horror and evil of the Armenian Genocide and its  
29 ongoing denial; and

30 WHEREAS, Every person should be made aware and educated  
31 about the Armenian Genocide and other crimes against humanity;  
32 and

33 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront  
34 of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human  
35 rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to  
36 prevent the recurrence of genocide; and

37 WHEREAS, April 24, 1915, is globally observed and recognized  
38 as the commencement of the Armenian Genocide; and

39 WHEREAS, Armenians in California and throughout the world  
40 have not been provided with justice for the crimes perpetrated

1 against the Armenian nation despite the fact that over a century  
2 has passed since the crimes were first committed; now, therefore,  
3 be it

4 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
5 *California, jointly*, That April 24, 2022, be recognized as “State  
6 of California Day of Commemoration of the 107th Anniversary  
7 of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923”; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Legislature commends its conscientious  
9 educators who teach about human rights and genocide and intends  
10 for them, through this resolution, to continue to enhance their  
11 efforts to educate students at all levels about the experience of the  
12 Armenians and other crimes against humanity; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Legislature hereby commends the  
14 extraordinary service that was delivered by Near East Relief to the  
15 survivors of the Armenian Genocide and the Assyrian Genocide,  
16 including thousands of direct beneficiaries of American  
17 philanthropy who are the parents, grandparents, and  
18 great-grandparents of many Californian Armenians and Assyrians,  
19 and pledges its intent, through this resolution, to working with  
20 community groups, nonprofit organizations, citizens, state  
21 personnel, and the community at large to host statewide educational  
22 and cultural events; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Legislature deplores the persistent, ongoing  
24 efforts by any person, in this country or abroad, to deny the  
25 historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and be it further

26 *Resolved*, That the Legislature respectfully calls upon the  
27 President of the United States and the United States Congress to  
28 formally and consistently reaffirm the historical truth that the  
29 atrocities committed against the Armenian people constituted  
30 genocide; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Legislature calls upon the President of the  
32 United States to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and  
33 durable Armenian-Turkish relations; and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
35 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
36 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each

1 Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the  
2 United States.

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5 **REVISIONS:**

6 **Heading—Line 2.**

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