

## House Resolution

No. 26

**Introduced by Assembly ~~Member Friedman~~ Members Friedman, Holden, and Papan**

*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Wendy Carrillo, Lackey, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Zbur, Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Juan Carrillo, Cervantes, Connolly, Davies, Dixon, Essayli, Flora, Mike Fong, Vince Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Grayson, Haney, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Lee, Low, Lowenthal, Maienschein, Mathis, McCarty, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Stephanie Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Jim Patterson, Joe Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Rendon, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Santiago, Schiavo, Soria, Ta, Ting, Valencia, Villapudua, Waldron, Wallis, Ward, Weber, Wicks, Wilson, and Wood)*

March 28, 2023

House Resolution No. 26—Relative to the Armenian Genocide.

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

1 from 1915 to 1919, inclusive, and continued at the hands of the  
2 Kemalist Movement of Turkey from 1920 to 1923, inclusive,  
3 whereby over 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children  
4 were slaughtered or marched to their deaths in an effort to  
5 annihilate the Armenian nation in the first genocide of modern  
6 times, while thousands of surviving Armenian women and children  
7 were forcibly converted and Islamized, and hundreds of thousands  
8 more were subjected to ethnic cleansing during the period of the  
9 modern Republic of Turkey from 1924 to 1937, inclusive; and

10 WHEREAS, During the genocides of the Christians living in  
11 the Ottoman Empire and surrounding regions, which occurred  
12 during the first half of the 20th century, 1.5 million men, women,  
13 and children of Armenian descent, and hundreds of thousands of  
14 Assyrians, Greeks, and other Christians, lost their lives at the hands  
15 of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the Republic of Turkey,  
16 constituting one of the most atrocious violations of human rights  
17 in the history of the world; and

18 WHEREAS, These crimes against humanity also had the  
19 consequence of permanently removing all traces of the Armenians  
20 and other targeted people from their historic homelands of more  
21 than four millennia and enriching the perpetrators with the lands  
22 and other property of the victims of these crimes, including the  
23 usurpation of several thousand churches; and

24 WHEREAS, Between 1918 and 1920, the Ottoman Turkish  
25 Army supported the newly established Republic of Azerbaijan in  
26 displacing and massacring thousands of Armenians in Baku,  
27 Shushi, and Nakhichevan, highlighting the Ottoman Turkish  
28 Empire's goal of erasing Armenians from their own territories and  
29 that of neighboring states' territories; and

30 WHEREAS, In response to the genocide and at the behest of  
31 President Woodrow Wilson and the United States Department of  
32 State, the Near East Relief organization was founded and became  
33 the first congressionally sanctioned American philanthropic effort  
34 created exclusively to provide humanitarian assistance and rescue  
35 to the Armenian nation and other Christian minorities from  
36 annihilation, who went on to survive and thrive outside of their  
37 ancestral homeland all over the world and specifically in this state;  
38 and

39 WHEREAS, Near East Relief succeeded, with the active  
40 participation of the citizens from this state, in delivering \$117

1 million in assistance, and saving more than one million refugees,  
2 including 132,000 orphans, between 1915 and 1930, by delivering  
3 food, clothing, and materials for shelter, setting up refugee camps,  
4 clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

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

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

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

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

33 WHEREAS, The Parliamentary Investigative Committee  
34 proceeded to collect relevant documents describing the actions of  
35 those responsible for the Armenian mass killings and turned them  
36 over to the Turkish Military Tribunal. CUP’s leading figures were  
37 found guilty of massacring Armenians and hanged or given lengthy  
38 prison sentences. The Turkish Military Tribunal requested that  
39 Germany extradite to Turkey the masterminds of the massacres

1 who had fled the country. After German refusal, they were tried  
2 in absentia and sentenced to death; and

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

11 WHEREAS, Those denials compound the grief of the few  
12 remaining survivors and deprive the surviving Armenian nation  
13 of its individual and collective ancestral lands, property, cultural  
14 heritage, financial assets, and population growth; and

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

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

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

32 WHEREAS, The United States is on record as having officially  
33 recognized the Armenian Genocide in the United States  
34 government's May 28, 1951, written statement to the International  
35 Court of Justice regarding the Reservations to the Convention on  
36 the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through  
37 President Ronald Reagan's April 22, 1981, Proclamation No. 4838,  
38 and by congressional legislation including House Joint Resolution  
39 148 adopted on April 9, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247  
40 adopted on September 12, 1984; and

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, Every person should be made aware and educated  
27 about the Armenian Genocide and other crimes against humanity  
28 to prevent them from occurring in the 21st century; and

29 WHEREAS, The State of California has been at the forefront  
30 of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human  
31 rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to  
32 prevent the recurrence of genocide; and

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

35 WHEREAS, Armenians in California and throughout the world  
36 have not been provided with justice for the crimes perpetrated  
37 against the Armenian nation despite the fact that over a century  
38 has passed since the crimes were first committed; and

39 WHEREAS, To this day, the Armenian people continue to face  
40 a threat to their very existence in their ancestral lands at the hands

1 of Turkey and Azerbaijan, seen during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh  
2 war with the perpetration of horrific war crimes and the ethnic  
3 cleansing of the region’s indigenous Armenian population, in  
4 addition to Azerbaijan’s invasion and occupation of Armenia’s  
5 sovereign territory in September 2022, and the ongoing blockade  
6 of the Lachin Corridor that has left 120,000 Armenians without  
7 access to food, fuel, medicine, and other humanitarian goods for  
8 over 3 months; now, therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That April  
10 24, 2023, be recognized as “State of California Day of  
11 Commemoration of the 108th Anniversary of the Armenian  
12 Genocide of 1915–1923”; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Assembly commends its conscientious  
14 educators who teach about human rights and genocide and intends  
15 for them, through this resolution, to continue to enhance their  
16 efforts to educate students at all levels about the experience of the  
17 Armenians and other crimes against humanity; and be it further

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

28 *Resolved*, That the Assembly deplores the persistent, ongoing  
29 efforts by any person, in this country or abroad, to deny the  
30 historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
32 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

33  
34  
35 **REVISIONS:**

36 **Heading—Line 4.**  
37

O