



SENATE RESOLUTION 19-012

BY SENATOR(S) Moreno and Tate, Bridges, Cooke, Coram, Court, Crowder, Danielson, Donovan, Fenberg, Fields, Foote, Gardner, Ginal, Gonzales, Hill, Hisey, Holbert, Lee, Lundeen, Marble, Pettersen, Priola, Rankin, Rodriguez, Scott, Smallwood, Sonnenberg, Story, Todd, Williams A., Winter, Woodward, Zenzinger, Garcia.

CONCERNING THE "COLORADO DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE" ON APRIL 24, 2019.

WHEREAS, This year marks the 104th 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, as a result of which there are fewer than 75,000 indigenous Armenians living within the borders of modern Turkey today; and

WHEREAS, The contemporary United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated in 1915, "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 many of the world's oldest churches, cathedrals, and cross-stones, as well as 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, Colorado newspapers widely reported the extermination of the Armenian people, and Colorado communities led by Governor

Oliver Shoup generously raised funds in support of national efforts to assist the survivors, known at that time as the "Starving Armenians", as illustrated in the January 16, 1919, Denver Post front-page story titled "Campaign for Armenian Relief is Making Splendid Headway" and a July 30, 1922, Denver Post front-page story titled "\$60,000,000 from U.S. Keeps Armenians from Extinction"; and

WHEREAS, In February 1921, the Colorado General Assembly expressed unanimous support for "Armenia, the oldest Christian nation and most martyred of the allies in the World War"; and

WHEREAS, In response to the genocide and at the behest of President Woodrow Wilson and the U.S. State Department, the Near East Relief organization was founded and became the first congressionally sanctioned American philanthropic effort created exclusively to provide humanitarian assistance and rescue the Armenian Nation and other Christian minorities from annihilation, and many of those rescued went on to survive, revive, and thrive outside of their ancestral homeland all over the world and specifically in the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Near East Relief, a national philanthropic organization supported by the federal government, succeeded, with the active participation of many Coloradans in delivering \$117 million of assistance and saving more than one million refugees, including 132,000 orphans, between 1915 and 1930 by delivering food, clothing, and materials for shelter and setting up refugee camps, clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

WHEREAS, This legislative body has commemorated the Armenian Genocide through annual resolutions since 2002, as well as authorized the 2015 improvements to the Capitol grounds' Armenian Genocide Memorial Garden, established in 1982, including the addition of a Khachkar monument, and establishing in 2018 the Sardarapat Armenian Memorial Highway in commemoration of the battle that saved the Armenian homeland from complete extinction; and

WHEREAS, The ongoing impunity for and state-sponsored denial of the Armenian Genocide, which inspired Nazi Germany's explicit conviction that it would undoubtedly escape accountability for its own genocidal crimes, as demonstrated in Adolf Hitler's August 22, 1939,

rhetorical question to his Wehrmacht commanders, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?", poses not only an existential threat to the Armenian homeland but also to human rights everywhere; and

WHEREAS, The ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide and its impunity include the Turkish-Azerbaijani blockade of the already-landlocked sister states of the Armenian homeland, the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh; and

WHEREAS, Turkey's unpunished denial of the Armenian Genocide and ongoing desecration of Armenian sacred sites without accountability has inspired and enabled the recent execution of an unparalleled cultural genocide of the entire indigenous Christian Armenian heritage in the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhichevan, where between the years of 1997 and 2006 the Azerbaijan Government eradicated every trace of the region's ancient Armenian past of an estimated 90 churches and 6,000 intricately-carved cross-stones, including the celebrated Djulfa khachkars, one of which was replicated in 2015 for the Colorado State Capitol Armenian Genocide Memorial Garden; and

WHEREAS, Each April, Armenians throughout the world honor their martyrs and commemorate the Armenian genocide, a term first used by Raphael Lemkin, the legal scholar who coined the word "genocide" and drafted the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, explaining on CBS television in 1949 that he "became interested in genocide because it happened to the Armenians; and . . . their criminals . . . were not punished"; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Governor Jared Polis has designated the month of April as Genocide Awareness Month by a proclamation, which designates genocide denial as "genocidal policy" and urges statewide genocide and Holocaust education; and

WHEREAS, We commend Armenians of Colorado, Inc., the Armenian National Committee of America Western Region, the Coalition Against Global Genocide, and other human rights organizations for their ongoing efforts to bring awareness and to educate the community, including our youth, about the Armenian genocide and all genocides and crimes against humanity; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Seventy-second General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

(1) That we pause in our deliberations to commemorate the 104th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, which will be formally recognized at a memorial service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 28, 2019, at the Armenian Genocide Memorial Garden, established in 1982 in the northeast quadrant on the State Capitol grounds with a memorial plaque, and renovated and renewed in 2015 with the addition of the khachkar memorial, a replica of a destroyed medieval Djulfa headstone;

(2) That we, the members of the Senate of the Colorado General Assembly, hereby acknowledge April 24, 2019, and April 24 of each year thereafter, as the "Colorado Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide"; and

(3) That we express support for efforts toward constructive and durable relations between the country of Armenia, the homeland for the Armenian people, and its neighbors, based upon acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian genocide, and a fair, just, and comprehensive international resolution of this unpunished crime against humanity.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States; the members of Colorado's congressional delegation; the members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues; the Honorable Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado; the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, D.C.; the Armenian National Committee of America in Washington, D.C.; the Armenian Embassy in Washington, D.C.;

the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia; the Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action; and Armenians of Colorado, Inc.

Leroy M. Garcia
PRESIDENT OF
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