



HR0261

LRB104 13219 ECR 25385 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois and the United States have both served as a refuge for those seeking protection from persecution and oppression whether by reason of religion or nationality; and

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WHEREAS, Those who cherish freedom can never take it for granted, and those who respect justice can never be completely secure in it; and

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WHEREAS, Those who value freedom are duty-bound to promote it and to protect it by using their voices and influence to meet the challenges threatening its sanctity and to help protect the life, liberty, and human dignity for all those who depend upon it; and

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WHEREAS, No other human rights violation deserves greater vigilance, protest, and recognition while demanding the strongest condemnation by freedom-loving people than the crime of genocide; and

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WHEREAS, For the Greeks of Asia Minor, Pontos, and Eastern Thrace, the horror and inhumanity of this savagely brutal genocide began as pogroms from 1913 to 1923 by the Ottoman and Kemalist governments, in what is today known as Turkey; and

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1 WHEREAS, In July and August 1914, months before the
2 Ottoman entry into World War I, Greek Christian men between
3 the ages of 18 and 48 years were drafted into the notorious
4 labor battalions of the Ottoman army, where most of them died
5 due to brutal labor conditions, malnutrition, and extreme
6 weather; and

7 WHEREAS, The Honorable George Horton, U.S. Consul General
8 in Smyrna at the time of the genocide, affirmed that from 1913
9 to 1923, Greeks of Asia Minor and Thrace endured immeasurable
10 cruelty resulting in genocide during a systematic Ottoman
11 government-sanctioned campaign to kill and to displace the
12 Greek population; and

13 WHEREAS, On May 19, 1919, the Pontian and Asia Minor
14 Greeks, whose ancestors had lived for three millennia in
15 communities in Anatolia and along the shores and in the
16 mountains of the Black Sea coast, in what is today northern
17 Turkey, were singled out by young Turkish officers for murder
18 and expulsion from their ancestral lands, resulting in over
19 hundreds of thousands of deaths and the uprooting of Greek
20 presence; and

21 WHEREAS, The biblical city of Smyrna, once called The
22 Jewel of the Mediterranean, was a cosmopolitan hub settled by

1 the Greeks in 1200 BCE and populated by large, highly-educated
2 Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities with a flourishing
3 commercial and middle class; and

4 WHEREAS, In September 1922, Smyrna was sacked, and the
5 Greek and Armenian quarters were set on fire and destroyed by
6 Kemalist forces; tens of thousands of Smyrna's Greek and
7 Armenian inhabitants were then massacred, turning the pier of
8 Smyrna into a scene of death and desperation, and many were
9 forced to jump to their deaths rather than be cut down by
10 Kemal's soldiers or consumed by the flames; and

11 WHEREAS, The remaining Christian inhabitants of Anatolia
12 were then forced to give up their homes, their businesses, and
13 their ancient connection to the land in a forced exchange of
14 populations through the Lausanne Agreement, sanctioned by the
15 U.S. and western nations, in order to safeguard their lives
16 from future massacres, marking the end of 3,000 years of Greek
17 presence and historic contributions to the western world; and

18 WHEREAS, The final stage of genocide attempts to erase all
19 memory of the victims of the crime as if they never existed;
20 this silence can only encourage future genocides by other
21 rogue nations that feel unbound by international laws and a
22 commitment to human rights; and

1 WHEREAS, In an historic 2007 resolution, the International
2 Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), representing hundreds
3 of the world's leading genocide scholars, affirmed the fact of
4 the genocide against Pontian and Asia Minor Greeks and
5 Assyrians as comparable to the genocide of Armenians;
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 we recognize the genocide of the Greeks of Asia Minor, Pontos,
10 and Eastern Thrace; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That we urge all Illinoisans to acknowledge and
12 recognize this genocide as a means of bringing closure to the
13 descendants of the victims and to prevent such atrocities in
14 the future.