

2023-J682

Senate Resolution No. 682

BY: Senator GOUNARDES

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
April 24, 2023, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day
in the State of New York

WHEREAS, This resolution arises from a sense of human decency and respect for the Armenian people and their history; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 24, 2023, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, During the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923, 1.5 million men, women, and children of Armenian descent, and hundreds of thousands of Assyrian and Greek descent, lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish Empire in its attempt to systematically eliminate the Armenian race, while hundreds of thousands had become homeless and stateless refugees; and

WHEREAS, April 24, 1915, is globally observed as the commencement of the Armenian Genocide because the arrest on that day, and subsequent execution, of several hundred Armenian leaders alerted the world about the Ottoman Turks' genocidal plan; and

WHEREAS, Despite Armenians' historic presence, stewardship, and autonomy in the region, Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire subjected

Armenians to severe and unjust persecution and brutality including widespread and wholesale massacres beginning in the 1890s, most notably the Hamidian Massacres from 1894 to 1896, and the Adana Massacre of 1909; and

WHEREAS, By 1923, these crimes against humanity not only resulted in the killing of unprecedented numbers of innocent people, but also had the consequence of permanently removing all traces of the Armenians and other targeted peoples from their historic homelands of more than three millennia, and enriching the perpetrators with the lands and other property of the victims of these crimes, including the usurpation of several thousand churches; and

WHEREAS, By consistently remembering and forcefully condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians, and honoring the survivors as well as other victims of similar heinous conduct, we guard against repetition of such acts of genocide and provide the American public with a greater understanding of history; and

WHEREAS, This resolution declares that this Legislative Body deplores the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person, in this country or abroad, to deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, The failure of the international community to hold responsible nations accountable for crimes against humanity results in travesty of justice, and sets a negative precedent; and

WHEREAS, The United States is on record as having officially acknowledged the Armenian Genocide with House Resolution 26 on October 29, 2019, unanimously confirmed by the Senate with Senate Resolution 150 on December 12, 2019, and then formally recognized by President Joe Biden on April 24, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Even prior to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States has a record of having sought to justly and constructively address the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's intentional destruction of the Armenian people, including through Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 adopted on February 9, 1916, Senate Resolution 359 adopted on May 11, 1920, and President Woodrow Wilson's November 22, 1920, decision entitled, "The Frontier between Armenia and Turkey"; and

WHEREAS, The generous philanthropy of the American people directly resulted in the salvation of the Armenian and Assyrian refugee's nation from being annihilated by the genocide by saving more than one million refugees, including more than 130,000 orphans through their humanitarian assistance; and

WHEREAS, New York is home to a vibrant Armenian-American community who have enriched our State through their leadership and contribution in business, agriculture, academia, government, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, New York's more than 25,000 Armenian-Americans and their ancestors have made numerous contributions to our State's vibrant history and culture, including the establishment of the Syrian Quarter in Lower Manhattan and "Little Armenia" in Murray Hill, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, the Diocese and Prelacy of the Armenian Church, the Armenian Center of Columbia University, the Armenian Students Association, the Armenian Youth Federation, the literary magazine Ararat, the seminal musical group Friends of Armenian Music, the Anthropology Museum of the People of New York at Queens College, and countless acclaimed eateries across the State; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York endeavors to encourage and promote a

curriculum relating to human rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to prevent the recurrence of genocide; and

WHEREAS, April 24, 2023, will mark the 108th Anniversary since the commencement of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, Armenians in New York, and throughout the world, have not been provided with justice for the crimes perpetrated against the Armenian nation even though a century has passed since the crimes were first committed; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Armenian community honor the memory of the victims of this genocide and emphasize that crimes against humanity must be condemned and never be allowed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 24, 2023, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.