

1 [Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day]

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3 **Resolution declaring April 24, 2009, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in San**
4 **Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, The Armenian people, living in their 3,000 year historic homeland in
7 eastern Asia Minor and throughout the Ottoman Empire, were subjected to severe
8 persecution and brutal injustice by the government of the Ottoman Empire before and after
9 the turn of the twentieth century, including widespread massacres, usurpation of land and
10 property, and acts of wanton destruction during the period from 1894 to 1896, and again in
11 1909; and

12 WHEREAS, The horrible experience of the Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman
13 Turkish government culminated in 1915 in what is known by historians as the first genocide of
14 the twentieth century; and

15 WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide began with the arrest, exile, and murder of
16 hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, and political, religious, and business leaders, starting on
17 April 24, 1915; and

18 WHEREAS, The Ottoman authorities planned and executed the unspeakable atrocities
19 committed against the Armenian people from 1915 through 1923, which included the torture,
20 starvation, and murder of 1,500,000 Armenians, death marches into the Syrian desert, the
21 forced exile of more than 500,000 innocent people, and the loss of the traditional Armenian
22 homelands; and

23 WHEREAS, The United States National Archives and Record Administration and the
24 official archives of other countries hold extensive and thorough documentation on the
25 Armenian Genocide; and

26 WHEREAS, The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the
27 Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of many countries,
28 among them the allies of the Ottoman Empire, against the Armenian Genocide; and

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1 WHEREAS, Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described to the United States
2 Department of State the policy of the government of the Ottoman Empire as “a campaign of
3 race extermination,” and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State
4 Robert Lansing, that the “Department approves your procedure. . . to stop Armenian
5 persecution;” and

6 WHEREAS, Leading news agencies of the time documented the atrocities being
7 committed against the Armenians; and

8 WHEREAS, Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide” in 1944, and who was
9 the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of
10 Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, The International Association of Genocide Scholars has repeatedly
13 affirmed that the massacres of Armenians ordered by the Young Turk government constitute
14 genocide; and

15 WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey unjustifiably and adamantly denies the occurrence
16 of this crime against humanity while actively continuing to remove traces of Armenian
17 existence, including the destruction of cultural heritage, to this day; and

18 WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey suppresses freedom of speech on the matter of
19 the Armenian Genocide and prosecutes its citizens under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal
20 Code for statements related to the Armenian Genocide, including Nobel Laureate Orhan
21 Pamuk and Hrant Dink, an Armenian newspaper editor, who was assassinated as a result of
22 these prosecutions; and

23 WHEREAS, The passage of nine decades and the fact that few survivors remain who
24 serve as reminders of indescribable brutality and torment, compel a sense of urgency in
25 efforts to solidify recognition, reaffirmation and justice of historical truth; and

WHEREAS, By honoring the survivors and consistently remembering and condemning
the atrocities committed against the Armenian people, as well as the persecution of the
Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard against repetition of the
crime of genocide; and

1 WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest and most active population of
2 Armenians in the United States, and those citizens have enriched our state through leadership
3 in the fields of academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the arts and are
4 proud and patriotic practitioners of American citizenship; and

5 WHEREAS, San Francisco Armenian-Americans are predominantly descendants of the
6 few remaining refugees who witnessed and survived the brutal murder of their families, the
7 destruction of their homes and institutions, and confiscation of all their properties, and

8 WHEREAS, Those Armenian Genocide survivors, who arrived in San Francisco and
9 reestablished themselves, built a thriving community that has created churches, civic and
10 charitable organizations and a school, and have become an integral part of the dynamic
11 culture of San Francisco, and

12 WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its
13 commemoration of the 94th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate
14 others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the
15 crime of genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors does hereby declare April
17 24, 2008 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San
18 Francisco; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will send a letter
20 urging the United States Congress and President Barrack H. Obama to give just recognition of
21 the Armenian Genocide.
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