

1 [Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day.]

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3 **Resolution declaring April 24, 2007 As Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in San**
4 **Francisco.**

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

10 WHEREAS, The horrible experience of the Armenians at the hands of their oppressors
11 culminated in 1915 in what is known by historians as the first genocide of the twentieth
12 century; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described to the United States
Department of State the policy of the government of the Ottoman Empire as 'a campaign of

1 race extermination,' and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State
2 Robert Lansing that the 'Department approves your procedure. . . to stop Armenian
3 persecution'; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest and most active population of
29 Armenians in the United States, and those citizens have enriched our state through leadership

1 in the fields of academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the arts and are
2 proud and patriotic practitioners of American citizenship; and

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

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

10 WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its
11 commemoration of the 92nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate
12 others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the
13 crime of genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors does hereby declare April
15 24, 2007 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San
16 Francisco; and, be it,

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will send a letter
18 urging the United States Congress and President George W. Bush to give just recognition of
19 the Armenian Genocide.
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