

1 [Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day - April 24, 2012]

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3 **Resolution declaring April 24, 2012, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the**  
4 **City and County of San 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

WHEREAS, The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the  
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

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

1 Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard against repetition of the  
2 crime of genocide; and

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

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

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

14 WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its  
15 commemoration of the 97<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate  
16 others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the  
17 crime of genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors does hereby declare April  
19 24, 2012 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San  
20 Francisco; and, be it,

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will send a letter  
22 to San Francisco's elected representatives in the United States House of Representatives and  
23 Senate urging Congress and President Barack H. Obama to give just recognition of the  
24 Armenian Genocide.  
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