

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
HILDA L. SOLIS

April 19, 2022

Armenian Genocide Remembrance

Los Angeles County is home to the greatest number of Armenians outside of Armenia. Each year, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors commemorates the Armenian Genocide, which began on April 24, 1915, and resulted in the tragic loss of 1.5 million innocent lives.

Despite overwhelming evidence, the Turkish government still denies the occurrence of an Armenian Genocide. Many international and American leaders and elected officials from local, state, and federal governments have condemned the atrocities committed against the Armenians and are calling on Turkey to acknowledge the Genocide and its participation in it.

To this day, the Armenian people are still the targets of hateful attacks. In September 2020, Azerbaijan, with support from Turkey, launched a military assault on the Nagorno-Karabakh region, also known as Artsakh. In March 2022, Azerbaijani armed forces forced the displacement of more than 400 people from Artsakh. This ongoing conflict continues to affect the daily lives of Armenians around the world. In the midst of communities everywhere trying to emerge from a global pandemic and find a

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sense of normalcy, Armenians are simultaneously forced to grapple with the ongoing trauma and terror of war.

This year also marks the 30th Anniversary of the Azerbaijan's attack on the village of Maragha. Located in Artsakh, the entire town of Maragha was tragically destroyed—leaving both a physical and emotional reminder of conflict and distress that has lasted for decades. The attack resulted in 50 people dead and about 5,000 people displaced. For over 30 years, these unprovoked attacks have resulted in the deaths of many ethnic Armenian residents as well as the displacement of thousands of Artsakh residents. While Armenians have sought justice for their families and communities for more than a century, they also continue to live in the face of suffering today. In the midst of every act of hate, Armenians have proven they will not be silenced and will remain strong, resilient, and united.

Each year, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors proudly hosts community members, religious leaders, elected officials, and organizations at a Tuesday board meeting to solemnly honor the memory of those who lost their lives because of the Armenian Genocide. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, board presentations have been canceled until further notice. However, the pandemic will not deter our Board from recognizing this heartbreaking and historical event.

A series of separate but related actions have been taken by this Board and prior Boards to raise awareness and bring healing to the Armenian people. In 2005, then-Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich introduced a motion, unanimously approved by the Board, to support House Resolution 316, which “sought to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity relating to human rights and ethnic cleansing associated with the Armenian Genocide.” In 2015, the Board unanimously adopted a motion authored by Supervisors Michael Antonovich and

Hilda Solis to send a letter to President Barack Obama asking him to petition the Turkish Government to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

In 2017, the Board unanimously adopted our motion asking President Donald Trump to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide. To honor the memories of those who suffered and lost their lives, it is appropriate for this Board to take similar action now. In 2021, the Board unanimously adopted our motion asking President Joe Biden urging him to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide. On April 24, 2021, President Joe Biden officially recognized the Armenia Genocide. That was a huge victory for the diaspora and the result of decades of tireless efforts to have the highest level of our government call this genocide by its name.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS recognize April 24, 2022 as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in Los Angeles County.

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