



HR0870

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1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Illinois and the United States have been a refuge
3 for those seeking protection from persecution and oppression,
4 whether by reason of religion or nationality; and

5 WHEREAS, Those who cherish freedom can never take it for
6 granted, and those who respect justice can never be completely
7 secure in it; and

8 WHEREAS, Those who value freedom are duty-bound to promote
9 it and to protect it by using their voices and influence to
10 meet the challenges that might confront its sanctity and to
11 help protect the life and liberty of those who depend upon
12 freedom and human dignity; and

13 WHEREAS, No other human rights violation deserves greater
14 vigilance, protest, and recognition while demanding the
15 strongest condemnation by freedom loving people than the crime
16 of genocide; and

17 WHEREAS, For the Greeks of Asia Minor, Pontos, and Eastern
18 Thrace, the horror and inhumanity of this savagely brutal
19 crime began as pogroms in 1913 to 1923 by the Ottoman and
20 Kemalist governments, in what is today known as Turkey; and

1 WHEREAS, In July and August 1914, months before the
2 Ottoman entry into World War I, Greek Christian men between
3 the ages of 18 and 48 years were drafted into the notorious
4 labor battalions of the Ottoman army where most of them died
5 due to brutal labor conditions, malnutrition, and extreme
6 weather; and

7 WHEREAS, The Honorable George Horton, U.S. Consul General
8 in Smyrna at the time of the genocides, affirmed that from 1914
9 to 1923 Greeks of Asia Minor and Thrace endured immeasurable
10 cruelty resulting in genocide during a systematic Ottoman
11 government-sanctioned campaign to kill and to displace the
12 Greek population; and

13 WHEREAS, The Asia Minor Greeks and the Pontian Greeks
14 whose ancestors had lived for three millennia in communities
15 in Anatolia and along the shores and in the mountains of the
16 Black Sea coast, in what is today northern Turkey, were
17 singled out by the Ottoman and Kemalist authorities for murder
18 and expulsion from their ancestral lands, resulting in
19 approximately one million deaths; and

20 WHEREAS, The biblical city of Smyrna, once called The
21 Jewel of the Mediterranean, was a cosmopolitan hub settled by
22 Greeks in 1200 BCE and populated by large, highly-educated
23 Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities with a flourishing

1 commercial and middle-class; and

2 WHEREAS, In September 1922, Smyrna was sacked, and the
3 Greek and Armenian quarters were set on fire and destroyed by
4 Kemalist forces; tens of thousands of Smyrna's Greek and
5 Armenian inhabitants were then massacred, turning the pier of
6 Smyrna into a scene of death and desperation, forcing many to
7 jump to their deaths rather than be cut down by Kemal's
8 soldiers or consumed by the flames; and

9 WHEREAS, The remaining Christian inhabitants of Anatolia
10 were then forced to give up their homes, businesses, and their
11 ancient connection to the land in a forced exchange of
12 populations through the Lausanne Agreement, sanctioned by the
13 U.S. and western nations, in order to safeguard their lives
14 from future massacres; it marked the end of 3,000 years of
15 Greek presence and historic contributions to the western
16 world; and

17 WHEREAS, Silence is the final stage of genocide as it
18 erases all memory of the victims of the crime as if they never
19 existed; this silence can only encourage future genocides by
20 other rogue nations that feel unbound by international laws;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, In an historic 2007 resolution, the International

1 Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), representing hundreds
2 of the world's leading genocide scholars, affirmed the fact of
3 the genocide against the Pontian and other Asia Minor Greeks
4 and Assyrians as comparable to the genocide of the Armenians;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Acknowledgment of these past crimes should serve
7 as a deterrent to future aggressions by the Turkish government
8 and all other governments around the world; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
10 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
11 we recognize the genocide of the Greeks of Pontos, Asia Minor,
12 and Eastern Thrace and urge the Turkish government to do the
13 same as a means of bringing closure to the descendants of the
14 victims of these genocides and preventing such atrocities in
15 the future; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we act in the spirit of justice and
17 humanity and recognize September 14, 1922 as the end of their
18 presence in their homeland of 3,000 years.