

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 71

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 30, 2021

The Senate Judiciary Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 71.

This concurrent resolution recognizes the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire, as well as condemns modern day attacks against Armenian civilians in the Republic of Artsakh by Azerbaijan, done with the support of Turkey.

During a period between 1915 and 1923, Armenians were subject to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation, all of which were planned and orchestrated by the government of the Ottoman Empire. In all, approximately 1.5 million Armenians perished and hundreds of thousands more became homeless, stateless refugees. In 2019, the United States Congress expressed that it is the policy of the United States to recognize the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance; and on April 24, 2021, known as “Armenian Genocide Memorial Day” in Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, President Biden officially declared that the United States considers the historical events to be “genocide” in a statement.

Despite the historical evidence and international recognition, some deny that the Armenian Genocide occurred, including the government of the Republic of Turkey. Turkey has supported recent efforts by Azerbaijan, including military support in 2020, in its attacks against the Armenian population and cultural sites within the Republic of Artsakh, which declared its independence from Azerbaijan. The resolution condemns the attacks by Azerbaijan, recognizes the Republic of Artsakh’s right to self-determination and independence, and respectfully urges the President of the United States and United States Congress to do the same.

The resolution also expresses that it would be the policy of New Jersey to:

(1) commemorate the Armenian Genocide and acknowledge the crimes against Armenians by the government of the Ottoman Empire as an issue of international and historical significance;

(2) reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the State of New Jersey with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide; and

(3) encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, including the role of the United States in humanitarian relief efforts, and the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity from the 2020 attack on the Republic of Artsakh.

The committee amendments to the bill:

- summarize the policy of the United States in acknowledging the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance, including President Biden's declaration of the genocide on April 24, 2021, known as "Armenian Genocide Memorial Day" in Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh;
- declare the policy of New Jersey, with respect to the genocide, to include an acknowledgment of the crimes against Armenians by the government of the Ottoman Empire as an issue of international and historical significance;
- include references to the modern-day attacks on the Republic of Artsakh by Azerbaijan, with the support of the government of the Republic of Turkey, as described in the statement above, and condemn such acts;
- expand the list of recipients of the resolution to include the President of the United States and several congressional majority and minority leaders; and
- revise the resolution's title and synopsis to reflect the changes made by the committee amendments.