

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: April 7, 2015

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *SKT*
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 15-0002-S28
Assignment No. : 15-03-0254

SUBJECT: Resolution (Krekorian - Wesson - et al.) to support H. Res. 154 relative to the Armenian Genocide.

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Krekorian - Wesson - et. al) to include in the City's 2015-2016 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H. Res. 154 which calls upon the President to work toward equitable and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon Turkey's full acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide and a comprehensive international resolution of this crime against humanity.

SUMMARY

Resolution (Krekorian – Wesson - et al.), introduced on March 25, 2015, states that the Armenian Genocide began with the arrest of Armenian intellectual, political and religious leaders in the Ottoman Empire. The Resolution states that these arrests were followed by the deportation of nearly two million Armenians, of whom 1.5 million were killed and 500,000 were expelled from their homes during the period of 1915 to 1923.

The Resolution states that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the genocide which is recognized by historians and genocide scholars as the first genocide of the 20th Century. According to the Resolution, the Armenian Genocide is documented with overwhelming evidence in the national archives of several countries. The Resolution notes that Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the world as well as one of the largest populations of genocide survivors and their descendants.

The Resolution states that H. Res. 154 was introduced in the House of Representatives and calls upon President Obama to confirm previous statements that the Armenian Genocide is a widely documented fact. The Resolution further requests that the Obama Administration press Turkey for full acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the genocide.

The Resolution requests that the City support H. Res. 154.

BACKGROUND

According to the New York Times, the Armenian Genocide involved the deportation and deaths of millions of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire from the period of 1915 to 1923. Of the two million Armenians residing in the Ottoman Empire, 1.5 million were killed in what historians consider the first genocide of the 20th Century. According to the New York Times, Armenians who were not immediately killed were driven through maintains and deserts without access to food,

water, or shelter. The New York Times further reports that the genocide coincided with civil unrest associated with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire during and after World War I. The New York Times notes that it reported on the Armenian Genocide extensively and that evidence of the genocide was well-documented at the time by diplomats, missionaries, and others.

The Republic of Turkey, the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, has denied claims that the Ottoman Empire purposely sought to eliminate the Armenian population and has stated that Armenians were killed as a result of civil war, unrest, and infectious diseases. The Republic of Turkey further states that the facts surrounding the genocide are ambiguous and that larger numbers of Turks, Kurds, and Arabs were killed within the Ottoman Empire during the same time period.

On March 18, 2015, Representative Robert J. Dold of Illinois introduced H. Res. 154 relative to the Armenian Genocide. The Resolution calls on the President to work toward equitable and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon Turkey's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide and an international resolution of issues associated with the genocide. The Resolution currently has forty-nine co-sponsors, including Democratic and Republican members of the California Congressional delegation.

On February 14, 2007, the City Council adopted Resolution (Garcetti - Greuel - Hahn) to support H. Res. 106 which called upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to the Armenian Genocide, and urged the Republic of Turkey to end its decades-long campaign of denial (C.F. 07-0002-S22). On April 15, 2010, the City Council adopted a Resolution (Garcetti - Krekorian - et al.) to support H. Res. 252 which is substantially similar to H. Res. 106 (C.F. 10-0002-S22). The Wall Street Journal reports that the House of Representatives in 1975 and 1984 voted to declare the killings a genocide; however, the Senate did not concur with these votes.

Support of H. Res. 154 is consistent with previous City positions relative to the Armenian Genocide. Therefore, we recommend support of H. Res. 154.

Departments Notified

None.

Bill Status

03/18/2015

Introduced in House of Representatives; Referred to House Committee on Foreign Affairs.



Brian Randol

Analyst

Attachment: Resolution (Krekorian – Wesson - et al.)

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RESOLUTION

RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide began on April 24, 1915, with the arrest by Ottoman Turkish officials of key Armenian intellectual, political and religious leaders, followed by the murder and deportation of men, women and children --- a pattern that has been repeated over and over again in the Holocaust, in Cambodia, in Rwanda, in southern Sudan and in all other genocides since the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by Ottoman Turkey from 1915 to 1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, and 500,000 survivors were expelled from their homes, effectively destroying the 3,000 year presence of Armenians in much of their historic homeland; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the start of the horrific series of events that left millions of Armenians dead and displaced; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide is widely recognized by historians and genocide scholars as the first genocide of the 20th Century, and as the harbinger of all genocides that would follow; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide is clearly documented with overwhelming evidence in the national archives of Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, Turkey the United States, the Vatican and many other countries, and this vast body of evidence attests to the same facts, the same events, and the same consequences; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the world, and one of the largest populations of Genocide survivors and their descendants; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the Government of the United States properly recognize the Armenian Genocide, not just because of the moral implications, but because it can help to prevent future atrocities from occurring; and

WHEREAS, the Truth and Justice Resolution (H.Res.154), introduced and spearheaded in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressmen Adam Schiff (D-CA), Robert J. Dold (R-IL), David Valadao (R-CA), and Frank Pallone (D-NJ), offers a new approach to U.S. efforts to foster Armenian-Turkish relations which are equitable, constructive, stable, and durable; and

WHEREAS, the Resolution calls on President Barack Obama to stand by the statement, which he made before entering office, that "the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence"; and

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WHEREAS, the Resolution calls on the Obama Administration to press Turkey for full acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2015-2016 Federal Legislative Program support for the Truth and Justice Resolution (H.Res.154).

Co-Presented by: Paul Krekorian
PAUL KREKORIAN
Councilmember, 2nd District

Co-Presented by: Herb Wesson
HERB WESSON
Councilmember, 10th District

Co-Presented by: Mitch O'Farrell
MITCH O'FARRELL
Councilmember, 13th District

Co-Presented by: Paul Koretz
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

Seconded by: [Signature]

Seconded by: Mary Hartney

Seconded by: [Signature]

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