

1 [Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day - April 24, 2017]

2 **Resolution declaring April 24, 2017, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the**
3 **City and County of San Francisco.**

4
5 WHEREAS, The Armenian people, living in their historic homeland of 4,000 years,
6 were subjected to severe persecution by the Turkish government of the Ottoman Empire
7 before and after the turn of the twentieth century, including widespread massacres, usurpation
8 of land and property, and destruction of cultural institutions and monuments during the period
9 from 1894 to 1896 and again in 1909; and

10 WHEREAS, The unspeakable horrors experienced by the Armenian people at the
11 hands of the Ottoman Turkish government culminated in 1915 in what is known by historians
12 as the first systematic genocide of the twentieth century; and

13 WHEREAS, The Ottoman Turkish authorities planned and implemented the atrocities
14 committed against the Armenian people from 1915 through 1923, resulting in the deaths of
15 1.5 million Armenian women, men and children; and

16 WHEREAS, In response to the genocide and at the behest of President Woodrow
17 Wilson and the U.S. State Department, the Near East Relief Organization, the first
18 Congressionally-sanctioned American philanthropic effort created exclusively to aid the
19 Armenian people and other Christian minorities, was founded and provided unprecedented
20 relief, delivering more than \$117,000,000 of humanitarian assistance between 1915 and 1930,
21 and saving approximately one million refugees, including 130,000 orphans of the genocide;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide" in 1944, and who was
24 the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of
25

1 the Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the twentieth
2 century; and

3 WHEREAS, Those citizens of Turkey who speak the truth about the Armenian
4 Genocide – such as assassinated human rights activist and journalist Hrant Dink – continue to
5 be silenced by violent means and/or imprisonment, in part due to Turkish law which
6 criminalizes any expression which is considered to be critical of Turkish identity; and

7 WHEREAS, By honoring the survivors and consistently remembering and condemning
8 the atrocities committed against the Armenian people as well as the persecution of the
9 Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard against the repetition of
10 genocide; and

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

15 WHEREAS, San Francisco Armenian-Americans are predominantly descendants of the
16 few remaining survivors of the Genocide; and

17 WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its
18 commemoration of the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate others
19 about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the crime of
20 genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
22 hereby declares April 24, 2017 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and
23 County of San Francisco.

