[Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day - April 24, 2018]

Resolution declaring April 24, 2018, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San Francisco.

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of
the Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the twentieth century; and

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

WHEREAS, 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the genocidal pogroms against Armenians in the cities of Sumgait and Baku, Azerbaijan, following a peaceful demand by the Armenian autonomous republic of Nagorno Karabagh to reunite with the Republic of Armenia; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its commemoration of the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the crime of genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby declares April 24, 2018, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San Francisco.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges San Francisco's elected representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to accord recognition of the Armenian Genocide through passage of House Resolution 220; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the San Francisco Board of Education to reaffirm its commitment to teaching about the Armenian Genocide in San Francisco Schools as indicated in the California State Board of Education's History Social Sciences framework and standards, by communicating this intention to its high school Social Studies and English Language Arts educators, and by offering appropriate professional development training and instructional resources on the subject to social studies and English language arts educators.
Resolution declaring April 24, 2018, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San Francisco.

April 17, 2018 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 10 - Breed, Cohen, Fewer, Kim, Ronen, Safai, Sheehy, Stefani, Tang and Yee
Excused: 1 - Peskin

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 4/17/2018 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Mark E. Farrell
Mayor

Date Approved: 4/27/18