

House Resolution 428

By: Representatives Jacobs of the 80th, Abrams of the 89th, Pak of the 108th, Wilkinson of the 52nd, Oliver of the 82nd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of April, 2015, as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the
2 Capitol and inviting the Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide to be recognized by the
3 House of Representatives; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the goal of Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month is to educate the public
5 about the history of previous and contemporary genocides; how to advocate against future
6 genocides; to focus attention on the specter of genocide so that policies, strategies, and
7 programs geared towards combating the evils of genocide can be developed; and to
8 commemorate the victims of genocide; and

9 WHEREAS, during World War II, a Polish lawyer of Jewish decent, Raphael Lemkin,
10 coined the term "genocide" to describe the coordinated plan of actions aimed at the
11 destruction of essential foundations of the life of certain groups with the aim of annihilating
12 a group itself by disintegrating a group's social institutions, culture, language, national or
13 ethnic identities, religion, and economic existence while also destroying the personal
14 security, liberty, health, and dignity, as well as the lives, of individuals belonging to the
15 group; and

16 WHEREAS, throughout history, numerous genocides originated or stemmed from events that
17 occurred in April, and as a result, many institutions around the world have designated April
18 to be a month of genocide prevention and awareness; and

19 WHEREAS, when coining the term "genocide," Raphael Lemkin was moved to investigate
20 the forced assimilation, deportation, and near eradication of the Armenian population
21 beginning in April, 1915; prompting Adolf Hitler to remark in 1939, "Who after all, speaks
22 today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" This April marks the 100th anniversary of the
23 Armenian (and other Christian communities') genocide during the time of the Ottoman
24 Empire; and

25 WHEREAS, in April of 1933, the Nazis issued a decree preparing the way for the "Final
26 Solution" defining non-Aryans as "anyone descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish,
27 parents or grandparents"; and

28 WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 40th anniversary of the Cambodian genocide, where, in April
29 of 1975, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia, conducting wide-spread
30 killings of people belonging to specific groups, as well as an involuntary relocation of all city
31 dwellers to the countryside for forced labor in squalid conditions, resulting in famine and
32 starvation which turned the countryside into killing fields; these acts resulted in the deaths
33 of two million people; and

34 WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo,
35 Srebrenica, and other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which ultimately led to the deaths
36 of more than 200,000 Bosniaks, or Bosnian Muslims; and

37 WHEREAS, the Al-Anfal Campaign (1984-1988), under the leadership of Saddam Hussein,
38 sought to destroy and depopulate the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq and notoriously used
39 chemical weapons to this end, which caused the death of over 180,000 Kurds and others, the
40 destruction of more than 4,500 villages (90 percent of villages in the region), and resulted
41 in creating millions of refugees and internally displaced persons; and

42 WHEREAS, in April of 1994, the Rwandan president's airplane was shot down, which led
43 to the slaying of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the Interhamwe over the next three
44 months; and

45 WHEREAS, in April of 2003, the displacement and killing of Darfurians began by the
46 Government of Sudan, and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the displacement of
47 millions, which continues unabated today; and

48 WHEREAS, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/L) has forcefully caused the civilian population
49 of the Ezidi-Kurdish religious minority in Iraq and Syria, beginning in 2014 through the
50 present day, to flee from their ancestral towns, villages, and holy sites as a result of forced
51 conversion, killing, kidnapping, and enslaving their population - particularly women and
52 children. According to their records, this is the 74th genocide throughout that population's
53 history; and

54 WHEREAS, the Genocide Prevention Task Force released its report on December of 2008
55 to spotlight genocide prevention as a national priority; and

56 WHEREAS, in 2011, the President of the United States declared the prevention of mass
57 atrocities and genocide to be a "core national security interest and core moral responsibility"
58 of the United States and ordered the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board in 2012; and

59 WHEREAS, the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust is a state agency whose mission is
60 to use the lessons of the Holocaust to educate the citizens of Georgia on the consequences
61 of unchecked hate and the need for social justice, and to encourage strong moral character
62 and citizenship; and

63 WHEREAS, the Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide operates as a proactive group with
64 a mission to develop a permanent antigencide constituency in Georgia, and it depends on
65 citizen support to engage elected officials at the state and national levels through advocacy
66 and action and by creating awareness within the community; and

67 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper to recognize the contributions of the Georgia
68 Coalition to Prevent Genocide, Eternal-Life Hemshech of Holocaust Survivors, the Georgia
69 Commission on the Holocaust, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Atlanta, the
70 National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the American Jewish Committee Atlanta
71 Regional Office, and ACCESS Atlanta in their efforts to enhance the security and dignity of
72 minority populations across the globe.

73 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
74 the members of this body recognize the month of April, 2015, as Genocide Prevention and
75 Awareness Month at the Capitol, commend the Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide for
76 its dedicated efforts in preventing genocide, and invite its members to be recognized by the
77 House of Representatives at a date and time to be determined by the Speaker of the House
78 of Representatives.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
80 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
81 Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide.