

Senate Resolution 991

By: Senators Parent of the 42nd, Shafer of the 48th, Unterman of the 45th, McKoon of the 29th, Orrock of the 36th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of April, 2016, as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the
2 Capitol; and for other purposes.

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

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

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

18 WHEREAS, when coining the term "genocide," Raphael Lemkin was moved to investigate
19 the forced assimilation, deportation, and near eradication of the Armenian population and
20 other Christian communities, beginning in April, 1915, prompting Adolf Hitler to remark in
21 1939, "Who after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"; and

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

25 WHEREAS, in 1975, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia, conducting
26 widespread killings of people belonging to specific groups, as well as an involuntary
27 relocation of all city dwellers to the countryside for forced labor in squalid conditions,
28 resulting in famine and starvation which turned the countryside into killing fields; these acts
29 resulted in the deaths of 2 million people; and

30 WHEREAS, the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and other cities in Bosnia and
31 Herzegovina, which ultimately led to the deaths of more than 200,000 Bosniaks, or Bosnian
32 Muslims; and

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

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

41 WHEREAS, in April of 2003, the displacement and killing of Darfurians began by the
42 government of Sudan, and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the displacement of
43 millions, which continues unabated to this day; and

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

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

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

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

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

63 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper to recognize the contributions of the Georgia
64 Coalition to Prevent Genocide, Am Yisrael Chai, Eternal-Life Hemshech of Holocaust
65 Survivors, the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, the Jewish Community Relations
66 Council of Atlanta, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the American Jewish
67 Committee (AJC) Atlanta Regional Office, and AJC's ACCESS Atlanta in their efforts to
68 enhance the security and dignity of minority populations across the globe.

69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
70 recognize the month of April, 2016, as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the
71 Capitol and commend the Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide for its dedicated efforts in
72 preventing genocide.

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
74 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the Georgia
75 Coalition to Prevent Genocide.