

House Resolution 320

By: Representatives Abrams of the 89th, Henson of the 86th, Park of the 101st, Glanton of the 75th, and Taylor of the 79th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April, 2017, as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month at the state capitol;
2 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 and mass atrocities can be
7 developed; and to 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 awareness and prevention; 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, from 1932 to 1933, the Holodomor, an artificial famine, was imposed by
26 Stalin's regime on Soviet Ukraine and killed up to eight million individuals; and

27 WHEREAS, in 1941, possibly the largest two-day massacre during the Holocaust,
28 remembered as Babyn Yar, took place in Kiev, Ukraine; and

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

34 WHEREAS, the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and other cities in Bosnia and
35 Herzegovina, which ultimately led to the deaths of more than 200,000 Bosniaks, or Bosnian
36 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 that end, which caused the deaths of over 180,000 Kurds and others,
40 the 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 to this day; and

48 WHEREAS, DAESH, the so-called Islamic State, has forcefully caused the civilian
49 population of the Ezidi-Kurdhish religious minority in Iraq and Syria, beginning in 2014
50 through the present day, to flee from their ancestral towns, villages, and holy sites as a result
51 of forced conversion, killing, kidnapping, and enslaving of their population-particularly
52 women and children. According to their records, this is the 74th genocide throughout that
53 population's 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 anti-genocide 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 Georgia
68 communities and the Georgia Coalition to Prevent Genocide, Am Yisrael Chai, Eternal-Life
69 Hemshech of Holocaust Survivors, the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, the Jewish
70 Community Relations Council of Atlanta, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights,
71 the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Atlanta Regional Office, and AJC's ACCESS Atlanta
72 in their efforts to enhance the security and dignity of 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, 2017, as Genocide Prevention and
75 Awareness Month at the state capitol and commend the Georgia Coalition to Prevent
76 Genocide for its dedicated efforts in advocating towards the prevention of genocide and mass
77 atrocities.

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