

Senate Resolution 260

By: Senators Fort of the 39th, Lucas of the 26th, Rhett of the 33rd and Jones II of the 22nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the Artsakh Republic's efforts to develop as a free and independent nation; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Region of Artsakh, also known as Mountainous Karabakh, is located in the
4 South Caucasus and has historically been Armenian territory, populated by an overwhelming
5 majority of Armenians; and

6 WHEREAS, in 1921, the communist dictatorship of Joseph Stalin, in violation of the
7 national, territorial, and human rights of the Armenian people and of international law,
8 annexed the region of Artsakh which was composed of a 95 percent Armenian population,
9 and joined it with Soviet Azerbaijan as an autonomous region which in 1923 formed
10 Armenian autonomy on part of the Artsakh territory, being deliberately cut off from Soviet
11 Armenia territorially; and

12 WHEREAS, for decades, Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh, having arbitrarily and illegally
13 been severed from Armenia and forced under Soviet Azerbaijani administration, peacefully
14 demonstrated for national independence and individual freedom and against Soviet
15 Azerbaijani repression and discrimination; and

16 WHEREAS, in the years immediately preceding the Artsakh Republic's declaration of
17 independence, these peaceful demonstrations were met with acts of violent repression by
18 Soviet Azerbaijani forces who refused to allow the reestablishment of the people of Nagorno
19 Karabakh's national independence; and

20 WHEREAS, during the repressive and violent events leading to the birth of the Artsakh
21 Republic, ethnic Armenians were killed in Sumgait (February 1988), Kirovabad (November
22 1988), and Baku (January 1990), by Soviet Azerbaijani forces. Over 350,000 Armenians
23 were forcibly deported from Azerbaijan; and

24 WHEREAS, in July of 1988, within months of the Sumgait tragedy, the United States Senate
25 unanimously passed Amendment 2690 to the Fiscal Year 1989 Foreign Operations
26 Appropriations bill (H.R. 4782), concerning the Karabakh conflict and calling on the Soviet
27 government to "respect the legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people ..." and noted that
28 "dozens of Armenians have been killed and hundreds injured during the recent unrests ...";
29 and

30 WHEREAS, the citizens of Artsakh Republic would not be deterred and would not allow
31 their dream of national independence, and their inherent desire for individual freedom, to be
32 destroyed by violence and repression; and

33 WHEREAS, on December 10th of 1991, despite continued violence against the people of
34 Nagorno Karabakh, a popular referendum proclaiming the republic took place in Nagorno
35 Karabakh during the process of the Soviet Union disintegration; and

36 WHEREAS, under the watchful eye of more than 50 international observers and in full
37 compliance with international standards for free and fair elections, more than 80 percent of
38 the eligible voters in Nagorno Karabakh cast a ballot. Ninety-eight percent of those casting
39 ballots overwhelmingly chose national independence and individual freedom from USSR,
40 thereby choosing the path of democracy after decades of communist control; and

41 WHEREAS, the population of Nagorno Karabakh then held free, democratic, and direct
42 elections for its parliament; and

43 WHEREAS, on January 6th of 1992, the first-ever freely elected Parliament of Nagorno
44 Karabakh adopted a Declaration of Independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic,
45 Artsakh; and

46 WHEREAS, from the earliest days of its formation, the Republic's freely elected
47 governmental bodies have continuously striven to build an open and democratic society
48 through free and transparent elections, affirmed by international observers; and

49 WHEREAS, since signing a cease-fire agreement with Azerbaijan in 1994, after three years
50 of armed conflict, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic registered significant progress in post-war
51 humanitarian and economic development; and

52 WHEREAS, despite the 1994 cease-fire agreement, the Artsakh Republic's security and
53 sovereignty continue to be threatened by regional tension and hostile acts as further
54 evidenced by Azerbaijan's recent aggression against the peaceful population of Artsakh
55 Republic in April 2016, leaving no alternative to the peaceful resolution of the conflict but
56 on the basis of recognition of Artsakh Republic's independence and sovereignty.

57 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
58 recognize the Artsakh Republic's continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent
59 nation in order to guarantee its citizens those rights inherent in a free and independent
60 society; recognize the Artsakh Republic's continued constructive involvement with the
61 international community and its efforts to reach a lasting solution to the existing regional
62 problems, and to establish peace and stability in the strategically important region of South
63 Caucasus; recommend the President and Congress of the United States of America to
64 recognize the independence of the Artsakh Republic and nations neighboring the Republic
65 to foster and maintain peaceful relations with the people of the Artsakh Republic;
66 furthermore recommend our country's leaders to continue promoting humanitarian and
67 economic rehabilitation of the Artsakh Republic and to fully support its continuing
68 development of a free and democratic society, with all the social, economic, and political
69 advantages that such a free and democratic society brings to its citizens; and recommend the
70 United States of America to support strengthening and solidifying our country's relationship
71 with the Artsakh Republic and its citizens, both culturally and economically, to insure the
72 continued survival of this nation's burgeoning growth of freedom and democracy.

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 President of the
75 United States and to Georgia's Congressional Delegation.