State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide

WHEREAS, 1.5 million men, women and children of Armenian descent were victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1915 and thereafter; and

WHEREAS, the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated, "Whatever crimes the most perverted instincts the human mind can devise, and whatever refinements of persecutions and injustice the most debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortunes of these devoted people; and, I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this; and the great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915; and the killing of the Armenian people was accomplished by the systematic destruction of churches, schools, libraries, treasures of art, and cultural monuments in an attempt to eliminate all traces of a noble civilization with a history of more than 3,000 years"; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide has been acknowledged by countries and international bodies such as Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Council of Europe, Cyprus, the European Parliament, France, Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Nations and Uruguay; and

WHEREAS, residents of Rhode Island are highly sensitive to the need for consistently remembering and openly condemning crimes committed against any culture or people to prevent similar atrocities in the future; and

WHEREAS, each year Armenians throughout the world honor those who perished from 1915 to 1923, and all the world's people should commemorate the Armenian Genocide because it stands as an ugly testament to man's inhumanity to man; and

WHEREAS, we must do our best to raise awareness about the Armenian Genocide not only because it is an undeniable chapter of world history, but also because learning more about this unconscionable tragedy will help better understand the necessity of eliminating hatred from our own; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust, the international community responded to Nazi Germany's methodically orchestrated acts of genocide by approving the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and

WHEREAS, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide confirms that genocide is a crime under international law, defines genocide as certain acts committed with intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, and provides that parties to the Convention undertake to enact domestic legislation to provide effective penalties for persons who are guilty of genocide; and

WHEREAS, the United States, under President Harry Truman, stood as the first nation to sign the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of the Genocide Convention Implementation Act marked a principled stand by the United States against the crime of genocide and an important step toward ensuring the lessons of the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, and the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda, among others, will be used to help prevent future genocides; and

WHEREAS, despite the international community's consensus against genocide, as demonstrated by the fact that 133 nations are party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and through other instruments and actions, denial of past instances of genocide continues and many thousands of innocent people continue to be victims of genocide; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lincoln D. Chafee, do hereby recognize April 24, 2012 as Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide in the State of Rhode Island, and further proclaim that we, as citizens of the State of Rhode Island, should strive to overcome intolerance and indifference through learning and remembrance.

Given under my hand and the great
seal of the State of Rhode Island
and Providence Plantations,
this 10th day of April, 2012

Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor

A. Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State