



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, February 04, 2020

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO BEGIN A FRIENDSHIP CITY AFFILIATION WITH ALAVERDI, ARMENIA (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

In light of an action taken for the first time by Congress to officially designate the 1915 mass killings of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire as genocide, Mayor Robles is requesting the City Council consider a friendship affiliation with the City of Alaverdi, Armenia that could lead to a Sister City relationship.

On April 24, 1915, at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish government, the Armenian people were subjects of a systematic and premediated Genocidal campaign whereby 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were slaughtered or marched to their deaths in an effort to annihilate the Armenian Nation in the first modern genocide. Hundreds of thousands of women and children were subjected to ethnic cleansing during the period of the modern Republic of Turkey from 1924-1937.

In April of 2015, the City of Carson designated the City as "The City of Carson's Year of Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915" and the month of April of every year thereafter as "Carson's Month of Commemoration for the Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915".

On October 29, 2019, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted to formally recognize the Armenian genocide and denounce it. The resolution passed by a vote of 405 -to-11. It was the first time a chamber of Congress officially designated the 1915 mass killings of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire as genocide.

On December 12, 2019, the Senate voted unanimously to recognize the Armenian genocide as a matter of American foreign policy.

II. RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Mayor to select Alaverdi, Armenia to begin a Friendship City and move towards the establishment of a Sister City.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

The City Council is being asked to consider Alaverdi, Armenia to begin as a Friendship City. Alaverdi is a municipal community in the Lori Province at the northeastern part of Armenia, near the border with Georgia. It's located at the only direct rail link between Armenia and Georgia as is an important commercial and industrial center similar to the City of Carson. Its origins date back as far as 1st half of the 2nd millennium B.C. Today, Alaverdi has some of the most significant theatres in Armenia and has produced many prominent artists.

Having a long and rich history in the region, including the establishment of many kingdoms and also the establishment of the Armenian Empire during the first century B.C., Armenians experienced crimes against humanity and the consequence of permanently removing all traces of Armenians and other targeted people from their historic homelands, and enriching the perpetrators with the lands and other property of the victims of these crimes, including usurpation of several thousand churches.

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In April of 2015, the City of Carson issued a proclamation entitled: "The City of Carson's Year of Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915" and the month of April of every year thereafter as "Carson's Month of Commemoration for the Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915."

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The Trump Administration still does not view the mass killing of Armenians from 1915-1923 as genocide, despite overwhelming bipartisan support by U.S. lawmakers to formally recognize it as such. Since the House and Senate passed resolutions, instead of legislation that would have changed the law, the recognition is non-binding on the Administration and does not require President Donald Trump's signature.

The Mayor believes there could be collective interest with Alaverdi, Armenia to broaden and strengthen the similar values on cultural understanding, training, environmental stewardship, educational opportunities and economic development. The opportunity to establish a friendship would potentially identify activities that can generate new initiatives to further nurture economic, social and cultural relationships.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact at this time.

VI. EXHIBITS

N/A

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