

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1801 (Nazarian)

As Amended May 19, 2022

Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill would add April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," to the list of state holidays. The bill would authorize state employees to elect to take time off with pay in recognition of "Genocide Awareness Day," as specified. Additionally, would authorize community colleges and public schools to close on April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," as specified.

Major Provisions

- 1) Adds April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," to the list of state holidays. Any state employee, as defined, may elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit, as specified.
- 2) States that a state employee, in State Bargaining Unit 5 may elect to use eight hours of vacation, annual leave, or compensating time off consistent with departmental operational needs and collective bargaining agreements for April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day."
- 3) Provides that public schools may be closed on April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, agrees to close schools for that purpose. On April 24, or if schools are closed on that date, as specified, on an alternate day determined by the governing board, public schools and educational institutions may include exercises, funded through existing resources, remembering and honoring the many contributions that survivors of genocide have made to this country. Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt a model curriculum for exercises related to Genocide Awareness Day.
- 4) States that classified service employees may be entitled to a paid holiday on April 24 known as "Genocide Awareness Day," provided they are in a paid status during any portion of the working day immediately preceding or succeeding the holiday, if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, as specified, agrees to the paid holiday.
- 5) Provides a community college may close on April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, as defined, agrees to close the community college for that purpose.
- 6) Provides that classified service employees may be entitled to a paid holiday on April 24 known as "Genocide Awareness Day," if they are in a paid status during any portion of the working day immediately preceding or succeeding the holiday, if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum, as defined, agrees to the paid holiday.
- 7) Makes corresponding, conforming, and technical changes.

COMMENTS

Background:

According to information provided by the author, "The systematic killing of millions of Armenians for the end goal of ending the Armenian civilization is one of the great tragedies of history that created generational trauma that is felt today."

Overall, the Genocide occurred between 1915 and 1922. At the start of the Genocide, two million Armenians resided in the Ottoman Empire, but by the end of it, only 400,000 Armenians remained. The widespread denial of the Genocide enhances the trauma. The author states that, "To this day, the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey, denies the Genocide took place. Many national governments also deny its occurrence out of geopolitical considerations – namely, the consequences it would have on bilateral relations with Turkey."

It was not until 2019, that the U. S. House of Representatives passed a resolution recognizing the Genocide, and in 2021, President Biden issued a statement that recognized it for the first time. However, only thirty-one countries worldwide recognize the Genocide - and, therefore, the trauma that Armenians feel today.

With 205,000, Armenian-Americans living in California, this State holds the largest population Armenian-Americans out of any state in the United States.

According to the Author

According to the author, "Genocide has been an unfortunate reality since the dawn of humanity, being perpetrated on every continent, by and against every race. The act of systematically erasing another group is born out of hate, prejudice, and a lack of empathy. We can only resolve these fundamental human flaws through recognition, understanding, and awareness. Reflecting on these common human flaws is the point of this bill. This bill requires that we take a day as a state to reflect on previous and current acts of genocide, and, through this reflection, we can help prevent further atrocities. Additionally, this gives many with generational trauma recognition of that trauma and an opportunity to heal."

Arguments in Support

Jewish World Watch writes in support, "Genocide denialism is more than a simple denial of facts and is perpetuated by a lack of knowledge on the issue. This can result in those responsible avoiding accountability and creates the framework for future conflict and persecution. By erasing the past – oppressors and extremists are better able to foment hate among an unwitting public. Genocide commemoration is more than a history lesson. It is an opportunity to expand understanding of the consequences of dangerous speech and how othering can pervade societies. It is a powerful tool to engage people across generations in discussions about human rights, the dynamics of atrocity crimes, how to prevent them, provide necessary opportunities for healing."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, General Fund and special fund cost pressures of an unknown amount to the extent state employees decide to observe Genocide Awareness Day

VOTES**ASM GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: 20-0-2**

YES: Santiago, Aguiar-Curry, Berman, Choi, Bryan, Cooper, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Gipson, Jones-Sawyer, Lackey, Low, Mathis, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Robert Rivas, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Smith

ABS, ABST OR NV: Cooley, Eduardo Garcia

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 12-0-0

YES: Medina, Choi, Arambula, Bloom, Gabriel, Irwin, Kiley, Levine, Low, Santiago, Valladares, Akilah Weber

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-0-4

YES: Holden, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Mike Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Wilson

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong

UPDATED

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