
THIRD READING

Bill No: SR 23
Author: Gonzalez (D), et al.
Introduced: 3/30/23
Vote: Majority

SUBJECT: Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This resolution recognizes the week of April 17 to April 23, 2023, inclusive, as Cambodian Genocide Memorial Week, and calls upon all Californians to observe the week by participating in appropriate activities and programs.

ANALYSIS: This resolution makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) The Cambodian people have a long and rich cultural heritage symbolized by the capitol city Temple of Angkor Wat, which flourished during the Khmer Empire from the 9th to the 12th centuries and is considered one of the Wonders of the World, and now stands as a living icon of the endurance and genius of all Cambodians throughout the world.
- 2) Early connections between the United States and Cambodia began in the 1950s, when Cambodia sent bright and talented college students to universities, including California State Universities in Long Beach and Los Angeles, to study technical trades, engineering, and agriculture with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The relationship between the United States and Cambodia had been forged through educational and professional exchange, and therefore in 1975, with the impending overthrow of the government by the totalitarian Khmer Rouge regime, the United States accepted over 4,000 Cambodian evacuees to ensure their safety.
- 3) April 17, 2023, will mark both the 48th anniversary of the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, seizing control of Cambodia and the beginning of the Cambodian Genocide. Between April 17, 1975, and January 7, 1979, the Khmer Rouge of Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, General Secretary of the Communist

Party of Kampuchea, and other members of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and their agents, committed acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

- 4) The genocide and other crimes against humanity committed against the people of Cambodia, including various religious groups and ethnic minorities, during the Khmer Rouge regime led to the deaths of over 1,700,000 Cambodians, which was 21 percent of the nation's population.
- 5) After the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, over 140,000 Cambodians came to the United States as refugees, a group of special humanitarian and foreign policy concern to the United States because of the well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion and thus in need of protection in accordance with the United Nations' 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.
- 6) The Cambodian Genocide was a human tragedy and must be remembered for the scale of violence and devastation perpetrated against the people of Cambodia so that it does not happen again, there or in any other country. The suffering and loss of the Cambodian people and their accomplishments and perseverance in reestablishing families, communities, and enhancing the cultural and historical diversity of our state and nation should be recognized and honored.

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FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 4/11/23)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 4/11/23)

None received

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4/12/23 14:04:34

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