

## **“Reaffirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide” Gov. George Deukmejian’s Remarks in Support of S.Res.106 and H.Res.106**

Hi, I am George Deukmejian, and as the former Governor of California, I had the opportunity to work on many important issues over the years. Currently, I am an Honorary Committee Member of ARMENPAC, the Armenian-American Political Action Committee, and would like to take this opportunity to briefly speak to you about two resolutions pending in Congress regarding the Armenian Genocide.

Specifically, S.Res.106 and H.Res.106 call upon the President: 1.) to ensure that United States foreign policy reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide; and 2.) in the President’s annual message commemorating the Armenian Genocide to characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide.

As we look at the events that continue to unfold today in Darfur, I am reminded of the history that touches me personally. My parents and my wife’s parents had to flee their homeland because of similar atrocities. Speaking out against current day atrocities is an important human rights issue, and that is why I, and ARMENPAC, strongly support Congressional passage of S.Res.106 and H.Res.106, which restore America’s moral leadership and proud record in opposition to the Armenian Genocide -- the first genocide of the 20th Century.

From 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Turkish government attempted to exterminate its Armenian population. This is a fact verified in the United States National Archives and what United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau called a “campaign of race extermination.” There were some 2.1 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire; following the Armenian Genocide, fewer than 100,000 declared Armenians remained in Turkey.

It was not until 1944 when Raphael Lemkin, a Holocaust survivor and Professor at Yale University School of Law, coined the term “Genocide”. In defining the term, he described what happened to the Armenians and Jews as prototypes for the crimes of genocide.

Sadly, since the Armenian Genocide, the world has seen other such atrocities like the Jewish Holocaust and genocides in Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia and currently in Darfur. Worldwide condemnation of these genocides is almost unanimous, and taking steps to ensure that future genocides do not occur is the responsibility of every civilized nation. The first step in this process is always to recognize state sponsored genocide when it occurs, and to acknowledge those that have happened in the past.

However, the current government of Turkey inexplicably refuses to acknowledge that an Armenian Genocide occurred. Turkey has made it a crime to speak of the Armenian Genocide, and has even threatened, and prosecuted, reporters and authors who have written about the Armenian Genocide. Turkey’s denial of the Armenian Genocide does not stop at its borders, as it has hired American lobbyists to fight against S.Res.106 and H.Res.106 here in the United States. As these resolutions gain momentum and additional co-sponsors, Turkey’s aggressive lobbying tactics in opposition continue to increase.

S.Res.106 and H.Res.106 each have the bi-partisan support of over one half of the members in the Senate and the House of Representatives, and will likely succeed if voted upon -- however, additional support is necessary to see that these resolutions are brought up for a vote in each Chamber. As such, our work is far from over and we need your help now more than ever.

We must continue our coordinated efforts to contact our Senators and Congresspersons to either 1.) thank them for their support and encourage them to continue their good work if they are already a co-sponsor, or 2.) request their support as a co-sponsor by letting them know just how important this human rights issue is to you and millions of other Americans.

To learn more about contacting your legislators, please visit [www.armenpac.org](http://www.armenpac.org). There you can find out who your legislators are, and simple ways you can contact them and ask for their support. It will only take a few minutes of your time, but will go a long way in showing your legislator that United States reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide is an important human rights issue for you.

Together, we can do our part to honor the 1.5 million people who perished in the Armenian Genocide and prevent such horrific acts from happening again in other parts of the world. I ask you for your support, as well as the support of your family and friends, and I ask you all to voice your opinion in support of S.Res.106 and H.Res.106 now. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Deukmejian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Deukmejian  
35th Governor of California