

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 23, 2021

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2021–22 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 105

Introduced by Assembly Members Holden and Nazarian
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Calderon, *Fong*,
Friedman, Gabriel, Cristina Garcia, Gipson, and Mullin *Mullin*,
and Luz Rivas)

(Principal coauthors: Senators Archuleta, Borgeas, Durazo, *Hertzberg*,
and Portantino)

August 17, 2021

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 105—Relative to a sister state relationship with the Province of Syunik.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 105, as amended, Holden. Sister state relationship with the Province of Syunik.

This resolution would extend to the people of the Province of Syunik in the Republic of Armenia an invitation to join with California in a sister state relationship until January 1, 2026.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, For decades, California has been a refuge and home
2 to Armenian immigrants; and

3 WHEREAS, Notable numbers of Armenians began arriving in
4 California in the late 19th century. In the 1870s, a majority of
5 Armenian immigrants in California settled in the City of Fresno.
6 In the City of Fresno, Armenians flourished and made their mark
7 on the fruit, dried fruit packaging, and shipping industries; and

1 WHEREAS, The success of the Armenian community in the
2 City of Fresno attracted Armenians from across the United States
3 to move to the City of Fresno and make California their home. A
4 study from Stanford University revealed that in 1930, 84 percent
5 of early Armenian settlers moved to the City of Fresno after living
6 5.7 years in some other United States city. By the outbreak of
7 World War II, an estimated 10,000 Armenians resided in the City
8 of Fresno, making up about 25 percent of the county’s minority
9 population; and

10 WHEREAS, Armenian success in agriculture led to the first and
11 only United States-based Armenian community about 40 miles
12 southeast of the City of Fresno; and

13 WHEREAS, After World War II, the Armenian community was
14 centered in southern California, including in the Cities of Pasadena
15 and Glendale, and in the Boyle Heights and Hollywood
16 neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles; and

17 WHEREAS, While Armenians had settled in Hollywood much
18 earlier in the 20th century, Hollywood became an Armenian
19 enclave in the 1960s. This community became a refuge for Soviet
20 dissidents in 1970s, and in the 1980s became the ultimate
21 destination for many post-Soviet Armenians; and

22 WHEREAS, ~~As Hollywood became urbanized in~~ *In* the 1980s,
23 the City of Glendale became the epicenter of the Armenian
24 community in southern California. The City of Glendale continues
25 to be the epicenter of the Armenian community in southern
26 California to this day, with Armenian shops, grocery stores,
27 bakeries, and delis on every major artery through the city.
28 Significant Armenian representation on the City of Glendale’s city
29 council has facilitated the establishment of Armenian cultural
30 centers, Armenian language city voting materials, and dual
31 immersion language programs in public schools; and

32 WHEREAS, California is home to the largest Armenian
33 American population in the United States, and Armenians living
34 in California, most of whom are direct descendants of the survivors
35 of the Armenian Genocide, have enriched our state through their
36 leadership and contributions in business, agriculture, academia,
37 government, and the arts; and

38 WHEREAS, California has taken decisive action to acknowledge
39 the Armenian Genocide and to work towards a more global
40 recognition of historical facts. ~~Given recent attacks on Armenia~~

1 ~~by the Turkish and Azerbaijani governments, California stands~~
2 ~~with the Armenian people's desire to have security in their homes,~~
3 *California* recognizes the generational trauma caused by the
4 Armenian Genocide, and acknowledges the pain and danger of
5 any country's efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide; and

6 WHEREAS, In September 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom met
7 with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and signed an
8 agreement to create a Trade and Services Desk in Armenia. This
9 desk will be used to encourage trade and investment by Californian
10 and Armenian businesses, and will foster economic cooperation
11 and development by assisting entrepreneurs in connecting with
12 their counterparts to engage in various trade and commercial
13 activities; and

14 WHEREAS, The Armenian Province of Syunik is the
15 southernmost province of Armenia. It is bordered by the
16 Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran,
17 and the Republic of Artsakh or the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.
18 It is also one of the original provinces of the ancient Kingdom of
19 Armenia; and

20 WHEREAS, On May 12, 2021, the Azerbaijani military crossed
21 into the Republic of Armenia and moved 3.5 kilometers into Syunik
22 Province, seizing the entirety of Sev Lake. The next day, the
23 Azerbaijani military breached two other sections of the border and
24 occupied more areas of Armenia. It was initially reported that,
25 with Russian mediation, Azerbaijan agreed to withdraw to their
26 pre-May 12 positions, but with two small military camps being
27 established nearby. However, Armenian reports suggest that many
28 Azerbaijani soldiers remain illegally in Armenia; and

29 ~~WHEREAS, In acknowledgment of the Turkey-supported~~
30 ~~Azerbaijani occupation of border cities of the Syunik Province,~~
31 ~~and the reasons described above, the~~ *The* Legislature wishes to
32 recognize the Armenian Province of Syunik as a sister state; now,
33 therefore, be it

34 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
35 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature, on behalf of the people
36 of the State of California, hereby extends to the people of the
37 Province of Syunik in Armenia an invitation to join with California
38 in a sister state relationship until January 1, 2026, in order to
39 encourage and facilitate mutually beneficial educational, economic,
40 and cultural exchanges; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That it is the intent of the Legislature through a sister
2 state relationship with the Province of Syunik to further promote
3 the prosperity of both ~~regions~~, *regions and* to improve international
4 understanding and goodwill between both ~~regions~~, *and to publicly*
5 ~~declare California's solidarity with Syunik~~; *regions*; and be it
6 further

7 *Resolved*, That any sister state agreement be developed through
8 the mutual cooperation and engagement of the Legislature, the
9 Legislature of the Province of Syunik, and Armenia; and be it
10 further

11 *Resolved*, That any sister state agreement developed will identify
12 objectives, identify areas of mutual interest, create a list of
13 potential activities, and create an initial list of public and private
14 partners that will help to advance the purposes of the sister state
15 agreement, including one or more entities that will serve as a
16 facilitator and general point of contact; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
18 of this resolution to ~~the author for appropriate distribution~~. *the*
19 *Governor of California, the Lieutenant Governor of California,*
20 *the Governor of the Province of Syunik, the Legislature of the*
21 *Province of Syunik, and each Senator and Representative from*
22 *California in the Congress of the United States.*