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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 458

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 8, 2025

Designating April 24, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in Virginia.

Patron—Obenshain

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, beginning in 1915, the Armenian people suffered the systematic destruction of their population and identity under the Ottoman Empire, and an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the Armenian Genocide between 1915 and 1923; and

WHEREAS, April 24 marks the anniversary of the mass arrest of hundreds of Armenian leaders and intellectuals from Constantinople in 1915, which included physicians, teachers, writers, lawyers, and politicians, among others, and was perpetuated as a means to deprive the Armenian people of their ability to resist the ruling political party, known as the Young Turks; and

WHEREAS, many of those who were arrested and deported were ultimately executed, and the events of April 24, 1915, are considered to be the start of the Armenian Genocide; in the years that followed, Armenians were removed from their homes, abused, tortured, and massacred by the hundreds of thousands; and

and WHEREAS, numerous Armenians who were not executed were forcibly marched through the desert toward holding camps; many died on the journey from attacks on their convoys or from starvation, dehydration, and disease; and

WHEREAS, Armenians' roots in Anatolia date back to at least the sixth century B.C.E., but less than half of the world's Armenian population currently lives in modern-day Armenia; nearly 486,000 individuals of Armenian descent live in the United States, including nearly 6,000 in Virginia, many of whom are descended from survivors of the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, while efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide have been pervasive through modern history and persist to this day, 32 nations now formally recognize the Armenian Genocide, and Virginians are called to join in acknowledging this atrocity, mourn its victims, remember the suffering of the Armenian people, and strive toward a world where such atrocities cannot reoccur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate April 24, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Armenian National Committee of Virginia so that the members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.