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H.R. No. 258

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Over the past 100 years, human history has witnessed
2 the horror of the Holocaust and other genocides, and in 2009, the
3 Texas Legislature established the Texas Holocaust and Genocide
4 Commission to further educate Texans about those tragedies and to
5 coordinate memorial events; and

6 WHEREAS, Because numerous genocides have originated in April
7 or have stemmed from events that occurred in April, many
8 institutions around the world have designated that month as a time
9 for raising awareness about how such catastrophes become possible;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In April 1933, shortly after Adolf Hitler became
12 chancellor of Germany, the Nazis issued decrees that defined
13 millions of Germans as non-Aryan, that banned most non-Aryans from
14 the practice of law and from employment in the civil service, and
15 that restricted their enrollment in schools of higher education; as
16 the ferocious campaign to protect the purity of Aryan blood
17 progressed, millions of people became caught up in the increasingly
18 murderous system; the victims included individuals from many
19 ethnic, national, religious, and secular groups, together with such
20 perceived undesirables as homosexuals, persons with disabilities,
21 prisoners of war, trade unionists, and Communists; targeted for
22 total extermination were the Jews and the Roma; by the time World
23 War II ended, approximately six million Jews, two-thirds of those
24 living in Europe, had perished; estimates for Roma losses range

1 from about 250,000 to 500,000, including approximately
2 three-fourths of those in Germany and half of those in Austria; and

3 WHEREAS, In April 1975, the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh,
4 the capital of Cambodia, and initiated the evacuation of that and
5 all other Cambodian cities and towns in order to reorganize the
6 country as a classless peasant society; during the reign of the
7 Khmer Rouge, it is estimated that more than two million people died
8 as a result of torture and execution, as well as of disease,
9 starvation, and overwork on the new communal farms; and

10 WHEREAS, In April 1992, Serbian forces laid siege to
11 Sarajevo, the Muslim-controlled capital of the newly independent
12 country of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the attack on Sarajevo began a
13 period of "ethnic cleansing," which was aimed at expelling Muslims
14 from territory claimed by the Serbs; among the atrocities that
15 followed, the most notorious was the massacre at Srebrenica, in
16 which some 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed; and

17 WHEREAS, In April 1994, the airplane of the Rwandan
18 president, a member of the Hutu ethnic group, was shot down; the
19 attack set in motion the slaying of moderate Hutu leaders by Hutu
20 hardliners and the slaughter, over the next three months, of
21 800,000 Tutsis; in April 2003, the displacement of Darfurians began
22 in Sudan, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the
23 displacement of millions; and

24 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Prevention of Genocide Task Force,
25 convened by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the
26 American Academy of Diplomacy, and the United States Institute of
27 Peace, issued a report stating that in order to stop future

1 genocides and mass atrocities, effective prevention measures must
2 be implemented before a crisis erupts; central to this notion was
3 the idea that educating the public serves to protect individual
4 rights and promotes a culture of lawfulness that can help to prevent
5 future genocides; and

6 WHEREAS, Genocide often begins with the stratification of a
7 community in such a way that one group is ostracized and dehumanized
8 and a spirit of intolerance is created that can lead to the mass
9 murder of the targeted group and its supporters; it is hoped that
10 learning about past and current genocides will create a recognition
11 of the need for society to act when presented with instances of
12 hatred and intolerance and will encourage people to rally to the
13 protection of individual rights; and

14 WHEREAS, The Texas House of Representatives has chosen the
15 month of April to emphasize the need to heighten public awareness of
16 the early stages of human behavior that spawn acts of genocide, the
17 need to build strong communities and prevent future genocides, and
18 the need at the state and national levels to continue to honor all
19 who have been victimized by genocide; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
21 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby recognize the month of
22 April 2011 as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month as a tribute
23 to all whose lives have been touched by genocide and as a reminder
24 of the need for the protection of human rights and for vigilance
25 against the forces of intolerance.