

By: Harless

H.R. No. 1541

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The year 2015 marks the centennial of the Near East
2 Foundation, established at the behest of President Woodrow Wilson
3 to save the lives of Armenians under attack during the violent
4 dissolution of the Ottoman Empire; and

5 WHEREAS, In September 1915, the United States ambassador to
6 Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, sent a cablegram that alerted
7 President Wilson to the plight of Armenians threatened with
8 genocide in Turkey; a humanitarian committee was formed to aid
9 Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, and other minorities in grave danger,
10 and after the group was incorporated by Congress, it became known as
11 Near East Relief, or NER; and

12 WHEREAS, The organization mobilized people across the
13 country and around the world, and between 1915 and 1930, it saved
14 the lives of more than 132,000 Armenian orphans and one million
15 refugees; during this period, it built orphanages, food and
16 clothing distribution centers, medical clinics, hospitals, and
17 schools throughout the Near East to assist survivors; more than
18 1,000 American volunteers traveled abroad to assist in this vast
19 undertaking, and many Texans were involved in related fund-raising,
20 relief work, and public education programs; and

21 WHEREAS, A humanitarian endeavor on an unprecedented scale,
22 involving close coordination with foreign governments and local
23 groups, the work of the NER served as a model for subsequent
24 philanthropic initiatives and organizations, including the Peace

1 Corps and USAID; the current name was adopted in 1930 to reflect a
2 shift in focus from immediate relief to more sustained involvement
3 in the development of the region, and today, the Near East
4 Foundation conducts numerous programs to improve the well-being of
5 people in the Middle East and Africa; and

6 WHEREAS, During one of the darkest chapters of the 20th
7 century, the Near East Foundation intervened to provide critical
8 aid to a population in peril, and its accomplishments remain a
9 source of instruction and inspiration alike; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
11 Legislature hereby honor the Near East Foundation on the occasion
12 of its centennial and commend the organization for its
13 extraordinary contributions in behalf of disadvantaged people in
14 the countries it serves; and, be it further

15 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
16 prepared for the organization as an expression of high regard by the
17 Texas House of Representatives.