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**SCR-25 State highways: Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial.** (2017-2018)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 25**

**CHAPTER 106**

Relative to the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial.

[ Filed with Secretary of State July 18, 2017. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 25, Portantino. State highways: Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial.

This measure would request that the Department of Transportation erect informational signs on the Fair Oaks Avenue exit of Interstate 210 in the City of Pasadena, directing motorists to the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system and upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover the cost to erect those signs.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, For nearly 3,000 years, Armenians had inhabited the highland region between the Black, Caspian, and Mediterranean Seas; and

WHEREAS, The greatest atrocity that took place against civilians during World War I was the Armenian Genocide, in which an estimated 1,500,000 Armenians, more than half of the Armenian population living in its historic homeland, were executed, drowned, burned, forced to participate in death marches, or murdered by other means on the orders of the Turkish leaders of the Ottoman Empire; and

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide was well documented at the time by western diplomats, missionaries, and others, and the New York Times, in particular, covered the events extensively; and

WHEREAS, Average citizens in the United States came to the aid of Armenians as the first international aid mission of the American Red Cross was to help Armenian victims of the 1896 massacres and, in 1915, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief was established and raised millions of dollars to save the "starving Armenians," a term in common use at the time; and

WHEREAS, In May 1915, the Allies characterized the extermination of the Armenians as a "crime against humanity" as the word "genocide" did not yet exist, it was not until 1944 when Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jewish lawyer who had been moved by the massacres of Armenians and was then witnessing the extermination of European Jewry, coined the term in order to define the intentional attempt to destroy an entire people; and

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide is considered the first "modern" genocide in the way it was systematically planned and implemented, and, because the perpetrators were not punished and no restitution was made to the victims, Adolf Hitler saw it as

a valid precedent for his plan to wipe out the Jewish population of Europe, proudly stating in a speech before invading Poland in 1939 his intent to kill "mercilessly" and remarking, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"; and WHEREAS, More than 40 states, including California, have recognized the genocide, according to the Armenian National Institute; and

WHEREAS, Southern California is home to the largest Armenian community outside of Armenia, with the City of Los Angeles seen as a kind of Armenian cultural mecca and more than 200,000 people of Armenian descent living in the County of Los Angeles, according to United States census data; and

WHEREAS, The Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial is a monument that was unveiled in April 2015 in the northeast corner of Memorial Park in the City of Pasadena to honor the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, which was perpetrated by the Turkish government from 1915 through 1921, as well as to honor all victims of crimes against humanity; and

WHEREAS, The Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial is a site of religious and cultural commemorations by the Armenian community in southern California; and

WHEREAS, The Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial serves as a beacon of awareness of all crimes against humanity; and

WHEREAS, The Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial consists of a metal tripod standing 16 feet tall, in remembrance of similar tripods from which Armenian leaders were hanged during the genocide, from the top of which a drop of water falls every 21 seconds into a basin adorned with the ancient Armenian symbol for eternity, and each year 1.5 million drops of water fall from the tripod, one for each of the victims of the genocide; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the importance of the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial to the people of California and requests that the Department of Transportation erect informational signs on the Fair Oaks Avenue exit of Interstate 210 in the City of Pasadena, directing motorists to the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system and upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover the cost to erect those signs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Director of Transportation and to the author for appropriate distribution.