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ACR-105 Sister state relationship with the Province of Syunik. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 105

CHAPTER 10

Relative to a sister state relationship with the Province of Syunik.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 22, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

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

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

Fiscal Committee: no

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, the City of Glendale became the epicenter of the Armenian community in southern California. The City of Glendale continues to be the epicenter of the Armenian community in southern California to this day, with Armenian shops, grocery stores, bakeries, and delis on every major artery through the city. Significant Armenian representation on the City of

Glendale's city council has facilitated the establishment of Armenian cultural centers, Armenian language city voting materials, and dual immersion language programs in public schools; and

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

WHEREAS, California has taken decisive action to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and to work towards a more global recognition of historical facts. California recognizes the generational trauma caused by the Armenian Genocide, and acknowledges the pain and danger of any country's efforts to deny the Armenian Genocide; and

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

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

WHEREAS, The Legislature wishes to recognize the Armenian Province of Syunik as a sister state; now, therefore, be it

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

Resolved, That it is the intent of the Legislature through a sister state relationship with the Province of Syunik to further promote the prosperity of both regions and to improve international understanding and goodwill between both regions; and be it further

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

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

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor of California, the Lieutenant Governor of California, the Governor of the Province of Syunik, the Legislature of the Province of Syunik, and each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.