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Los Angeles Unified Schools to observe April 24 in recognition of the Armenian Genocide

Los Angeles Unified community will have the day off to honor those lost in the first modern genocide

LOS ANGELES, October 6, 2020 – Today, the Board of Education unanimously voted to add a new holiday to future calendars to commemorate Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day on April 24. The resolution, authored by Board Member Kelly Gonez, would give families across Los Angeles Unified the day off to observe and remember the start of a genocide that killed 1.5 million Armenians. That genocide is still denied by Turkish government more than one hundred years later. The importance of this resolution and the continued recognition of the Armenian Genocide is heightened by the current unwarranted attacks on Artsakh and innocent Armenian civilians by Azerbaijan, aided by Turkey.

“Each year, Armenian families across Los Angeles remember those lost in the first genocide in modern history, and many of them have a direct connection to the tragedy,” Board Member Kelly Gonez said. “This change in our calendar shows Los Angeles Unified’s commitment and solidarity to our Armenian community, especially during this trying time, to recognize and tell the truth about their history. Moreover, all students, regardless of their background, will benefit from learning about the Armenian Genocide as we teach tolerance and empower future generations to prevent recurrence of genocide.”

“We recognize and remember the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in hopes of helping to prevent such an atrocity from happening again,” Superintendent Austin Beutner said. “This resolution reaffirms our commitment to teaching students about the importance of human rights.”

“Today’s vote is truly a monumental moment for our community and the legacy of our ancestors,” the Education Commission of the Armenian National Committee of America – West Region (ANCA-WR) said. “This calendar change will allow our Los Angeles Unified Armenian community to participate and pass on the truth of our history to the younger generations. We thank Board Member Gonez and her staff for working collaboratively with the ANCA-WR Education Committee to reach this important goal. We also thank her fellow Board members for their efforts on behalf of the Armenian Community. We look forward to continuing our strong support to ensure all District students, regardless of ethnicity or national origin, benefit from learning about the Armenian Genocide as we teach tolerance and prevent recurrence of genocide.”

“We have to call out racism, hate, and injustice for what it is,” Board Member Mónica García said. “We are at a moment where the children we serve want to be recognized for the challenges they've faced, their struggle and hard work. We stand in solidarity with our Armenian brothers and sisters.”

“It is essential that Los Angeles Unified joins in recognizing April 24 as the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915,” co-sponsor of the resolution Board Member Scott M. Schmerelson said. “We must ensure that our students learn the truth about the Armenian Genocide and how they can prevent such atrocities against

humanity from occurring ever again. This date has become very important in our nation and I whole-heartedly support Los Angeles Unified taking the extra step to designate April 24 as an unassigned day so that our students and families can participate in remembrances and events that are significant to their family, culture, and history.”

“This is an important opportunity to honor and remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide and solidify our support for our Armenian families and educators as we pray for the people of Artsakh,” co-sponsor of the resolution Board Member Nick Melvoin said. “Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day will allow students to participate in events that remember the Genocide as an integral part of Armenian history and promote a more peaceful future.”

“This issue has been close to my heart for decades,” Board Member Jackie Goldberg, a co-sponsor said. “After the earthquake hit, in 1988, as a school board member, I encouraged students and staff to make small donations, raising tens of thousands of dollars to help. I went there to present the check and to tell the students and staff that the students and staff of Los Angeles Unified cared about them. We still care.”

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