

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE RESOLUTION ON SIKH GENOCIDE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1160 Session of 2018 INTRODUCED BY CHARLTON AND SANTORA, OCTOBER 15, 2018 INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, OCTOBER 15, 2018 A RESOLUTION Condemning the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence in India as genocide. WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is enriched by the diversity of its residents, who have cultivated a climate of social tolerance and intellectual pluralism that has sustained this Commonwealth throughout its history; and WHEREAS, The Sikh community, which originated in Punjab, India, and began immigrating into the United States over 100 years ago, has played an important role in developing the United States and this Commonwealth; and WHEREAS, Sikhism is the world's fifth-largest religion with nearly 30 million adherents, including roughly 700,000 in the United States; and WHEREAS, The Sikh genocide began on November 1, 1984, after the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the capital territory of Delhi and the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 Kerala and Maharashtra; and WHEREAS, The Sikh genocide lasted three days and over 30,000 Sikhs were brutally murdered or died as they were hunted in their homes, where they were hacked and burned alive; and WHEREAS, On April 16, 2015, the California State Assembly unanimously passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution 34, which recognizes the systematic and organized killings of Sikhs by the Indian government in Delhi and remembers those who lost their lives during the 1984 Sikh genocide; and WHEREAS, Eyewitnesses, journalists and human rights activists have compiled evidence showing that government and law enforcement officials organized, participated in and failed to intervene to prevent the killings through direct and indirect means; and WHEREAS, As recently as 2011, mass graves have been discovered in the villages of Hondh Chillar and Pataudi in Haryana, and many more will continue to be discovered in the future with Indian government officials and police flouting impunity; and WHEREAS, The "Widow Colony," the Tilak Vihar neighborhood in New Delhi, still houses thousands of Sikh women, who were forced to bear mass rape and witness the hacking, burning and murder of their husbands, fathers and sons and who are still are calling for justice against the perpetrators; and WHEREAS, Many of the survivors of the Sikh genocide eventually immigrated to the United States and established large Sikh communities in places such as Fresno, Yuba City, Stockton, Fremont, Glenrock, New York City and Philadelphia, among other places; and 20180HR1160PN4238 - 2 - WHEREAS, The Sikh community in the United States and this 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Commonwealth has recovered from the material damages of the genocide as they continue to keep the memory of those who were killed alive and will never forget the Sikh genocide; and WHEREAS, For years, the phrase '1984 anti-Sikh riots' was used to describe the events of November 1984, which was a distortion of the events that took place; and WHEREAS, Recognizing the state-sponsored violence that targeted Sikhs across India in 1984 is an important and historic step towards justice, accountability and reconciliation, which should be an example to other governments; therefore be it RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence in India as genocide.