

Senator Knezek offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 99.

A resolution to urge the President and Congress of the United States to recognize the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, to establish economic and cultural ties with the nation, and to support the peace and stability in South Caucasus.

Whereas, The region of Artsakh is located in the South Caucasus and has historically been Armenian territory. The region is populated by an overwhelming majority of Armenians; and

Whereas, Despite its historical and cultural ties to Armenia, in 1921, Joseph Stalin arbitrarily severed Artsakh from Armenia, and in violation of the national, territorial, and human rights of the Armenian people, the severed region of Artsakh was placed under the administration of Soviet Azerbaijani; and

Whereas, For decades, the Armenian peoples' peaceful demonstrations for national independence, for individual freedom, and in opposition to the Soviet Azerbaijani repression and discrimination were met with acts of violent repression by Soviet Azerbaijani forces who refused to allow the self-determination of the people of Artsakh. Soviet Azerbaijani's bloody response resulted in the deaths of ethnic Armenians in Sumgait (February 1988), Kirovabad (February 1988), and Baku (January 1990) and the forced deportation of more than 350,000 Armenians from Azerbaijani. In the aftermath of the Sumgait tragedy, the United States Senate unanimously passed Amendment 2690 to the Fiscal Year 1989 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill (H.R. 4782), concerning the Karabakh conflict and called on the Soviet government to "respect the legitimate aspirations of the Armenian people..." and noted that "dozens of Armenians have been killed and injured during the recent unrests..."; and

Whereas, The people of Artsakh overwhelmingly voted to support independence. On December 10, 1991, despite continued violence against the people of Artsakh, a popular referendum proclaiming an independent republic took place during the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Under the watchful eye of more than 50 international observers, and in full compliance with international standards for a free and fair election, more than 80 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot, and the measure passed with 98 percent in favor. On January 6, 1992, the democratically-elected Parliament of Artsakh adopted the Declaration of Independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic; and

Whereas, Despite a cease-fire agreement between the Republic of Artsakh, Azerbaijani, and Armenia that ended years of intense fighting, the security and sovereignty of Artsakh continue to be threatened by regional tension and hostile acts. The Armenians of Artsakh remain resolute in their efforts to exercise the right to self-determination and live free from violence and repression, and by recognizing the government of Artsakh, the international community can help put to rest this century-old conflict; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the President and Congress of the United States to recognize a free and independent Republic of Artsakh; and be it further

Resolved, That we memorialize the United States government to strengthen and solidify our country's economic and cultural relationship with the Artsakh Republic and its citizens and continue to promote the humanitarian and economic rehabilitation of the region; and be it further

Resolved, That we support the Republic of Artsakh's continued efforts within the international community to reach a lasting solution to the existing regional problems and establish peace and stability in the strategically important region of South Caucasus; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.