

Remarks by Elise Kenderian Aronson, Mistress of Ceremonies  
Congressional Armenian Genocide Commemoration  
Hart Senate Office Building  
April 9, 2019

We gather here tonight to mark the 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Every Armenian here tonight, in fact, every Armenian alive today has an ancestor who was a victim and stories of horror, despair, and death have been passed generation to generation.

You can't tell me that the disappearance of my maternal great grandfather's parents and sister was an accident. Denial will not change the 2-year death march that my paternal great grandparents miraculously survived.

We were reduced to less than half a million people, but more than 100 years later, we have shown that while there was horror and death, there was also survival and perseverance.

In fact, my two wonderful children Jack and Sona are here this evening. When I look at them – and any other beautiful Armenian children – I see not only the sacrifice of our ancestors made but the promise of our future.

With each passing year, the strength of the Armenian community here in the US and around the world grows. But we cannot let the passage of time reduce our resolve. Now more than ever, we must keep our collective quest for justice alive and thriving.

Despite the fact that the President of the United States has continued to remain silent in his first term in office, the long-standing and strong support we will see this evening from so many of our important advocates in Congress, will send a clear message that we will not rest and cannot rest until the systematic atrocities committed against our ancestors 104 years ago are recognized for what they were, GENOCIDE.

Let me be clear:

No nation deserves a veto over U.S. human rights policy.

No foreign power is entitled to a gag-rule against American remembrance of genocide.

It's in this spirit that Armenian Genocide resolutions were introduced this week in both houses of Congress.

Spearheaded by Representatives Schiff and Bilirakis in the House and Senators Menendez and Cruz in the Senate, these bipartisan measures aim to – once and forever – place America on the side of truth.

By ensuring ongoing official U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide – so that remembrances like this will have the full force of the U.S. government.

By rejecting, as a matter of U.S. policy, the denial of the Armenian Genocide – so that remembrances like this will never be threatened by a foreign power.

By encouraging expanded public education about the Armenian Genocide – so that remembrances like this can help inform and inspire U.S. leadership in preventing future atrocities.

It is my great honor to stand with the supporters of these resolutions- these ardent supporters who have stood with our community in the face of significant pressure and misinformation. It is my great honor to stand with them, and all of you, at this evening's commemoration.