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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 264 Session of  
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INTRODUCED BY BROWNLEE, KINSEY, CALTAGIRONE, V. BROWN, KORTZ,  
D. COSTA, CRUZ, O'BRIEN, COHEN, DONATUCCI AND PARKER,  
APRIL 22, 2013

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, APRIL 22, 2013

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A RESOLUTION

1 Supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination and  
2 efforts to develop its democracy.

3 WHEREAS, Artsakh, also known as the Republic of Nagorno-  
4 Karabakh, is located in the South Caucasus; and

5 WHEREAS, Populated for thousands of years by an Armenian  
6 majority, Nagorno-Karabakh is integral to the Armenian homeland;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Following the Soviet Union takeover of the Southern  
9 Caucasus, Joseph Stalin and the new Soviet government in Moscow  
10 arbitrarily, illegally and against popular will removed Nagorno-  
11 Karabakh from the newly established Soviet Socialist Republic of  
12 Armenia and placed it under Soviet Azerbaijan's administration  
13 as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region; and

14 WHEREAS, The people of Nagorno-Karabakh consistently  
15 protested their removal from Armenia despite concerted efforts,  
16 spanning seven decades, by Soviet Azerbaijani authorities to  
17 block Nagorno-Karabakh's democratic development and repression

1 of free speech by the Soviet central government; and

2 WHEREAS, At the first opportunity brought about by the coming  
3 collapse of the Soviet Union, the elected legislature  
4 representing the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, on February 20,  
5 1988, adopted a resolution ending this period of abusive foreign  
6 rule by returning Nagorno-Karabakh to the Soviet Socialist  
7 Republic of Armenia; and

8 WHEREAS, Assertions by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to  
9 their right to democracy and self-determination were met by a  
10 wave of pogroms and massacres inflicted by the Soviet  
11 Azerbaijani government against Armenians in Azerbaijan and  
12 Nagorno-Karabakh; and

13 WHEREAS, Additionally Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh endured a  
14 Soviet campaign to violently suppress the democracy movement as  
15 well as subsequent military aggression and blockades by the  
16 independent Republic of Azerbaijan; and

17 WHEREAS, On September 2, 1991, in a popular expression of  
18 democracy and self-determination, the elected legislature of  
19 Nagorno-Karabakh declared the establishment of the Nagorno-  
20 Karabakh Republic in full compliance with existing Soviet laws  
21 governing secession; and

22 WHEREAS, On December 10, 1991, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh  
23 voted overwhelmingly, in a referendum on the independence of the  
24 Nagorno-Karabakh Republic; and

25 WHEREAS, The democratically elected legislature of the  
26 Nagorno-Karabakh Republic formally declared independence on  
27 January 6, 1992; and

28 WHEREAS, In March 1992, the Conference on Security and  
29 Cooperation in Europe established the Minsk Group to spearhead  
30 diplomatic efforts to find a political solution to the Nagorno-

1 Karabakh conflict, officially inviting the elected  
2 representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh to participate as an  
3 integral part of the process; and

4 WHEREAS, The FREEDOM Support Act of 1992 imposed  
5 restrictions, subject to Presidential waiver, on United States  
6 assistance to the government of Azerbaijan until it takes  
7 demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive  
8 uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh; and

9 WHEREAS, On May 12, 1994, the Republics of Nagorno-Karabakh,  
10 Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a cease-fire agreement brokered by  
11 the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, the Kyrgyz Republic and  
12 the Russian Federation; and

13 WHEREAS, Under this agreement Nagorno-Karabakh has not been  
14 part of an independent Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijan has not  
15 exercised sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh; and

16 WHEREAS, The Nagorno-Karabakh democracy movement has inspired  
17 peoples throughout the Former Soviet Union to stand up against  
18 Soviet tyranny and for the independence of USSR constituent  
19 republics and regions, helping to bring democracy to millions  
20 and contributing to the end of the threat that the Soviet Empire  
21 posed to world peace; and

22 WHEREAS, The people of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic seek the  
23 fundamental rights enjoyed by Americans, namely the freedom to  
24 live in peace and security in their homeland under a democratic  
25 government of their own choosing; and

26 WHEREAS, For more than two decades, the Nagorno-Karabakh  
27 Republic has built a democratic, free-market society which has  
28 held parliamentary and presidential elections, all praised by  
29 international monitors as free and fair; and

30 WHEREAS, On December 10, 2006, the people of the Nagorno-

1 Karabakh Republic, reasserting and exercising their right to  
2 self-determination, voted overwhelmingly in a national  
3 referendum to adopt the Constitution of the Nagorno-Karabakh  
4 Republic; and

5 WHEREAS, Direct United States assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh  
6 has, since fiscal year 1998, represented a vital source of  
7 humanitarian relief and an important confidence-building measure  
8 in support of the ongoing peace process; and

9 WHEREAS, Removing barriers to unhindered government and civil  
10 society contacts and communications would facilitate the free  
11 flow of information between the United States and the Nagorno-  
12 Karabakh Republic; and

13 WHEREAS, Despite the support of the United States and the  
14 international community for peaceful negotiations, Azerbaijan's  
15 leaders continue to destabilize the region and undermine the  
16 prospects of negotiated peace through open threats of renewed  
17 aggression, a dramatic arms buildup, public incitements and  
18 regular cease-fire violations; and

19 WHEREAS, In December 2005, in an act of desecration clearly  
20 documented on videotape and condemned by the United States and  
21 the international community, approximately 200 Azerbaijani  
22 soldiers systematically demolished thousands of intricately  
23 carved Armenian Christian stone crosses and gravestones in the  
24 medieval Armenian cemetery in Djulfa, an Azerbaijan exclave of  
25 Nakhichevan; and

26 WHEREAS, Nagorno-Karabakh remains committed to independent  
27 development and constructive involvement in the international  
28 community despite this public statement from the Azerbaijan  
29 President in February 2012: "First, our main enemies are  
30 Armenians of the world"; and

1       WHEREAS, The House of Representatives recognizes the  
2 Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as a responsible partner in the search  
3 for a fair and lasting regional peace; therefore be it

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives respectfully urge  
5 the President of the United States and the Congress of the  
6 United States to support the self-determination and democratic  
7 independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its constructive  
8 involvement with the international community's efforts to reach  
9 a just and lasting solution to security issues in that  
10 strategically important region; and be it further

11       RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
12 the President of the United States, the United States Department  
13 of State and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.