

2001 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 68

October 17, 2001 – Introduced by Representatives PLALE, LADWIG, TURNER, J. LEHMAN, KREUSER, STEINBRINK, STONE, RICHARDS, STARZYK, OWENS, STASKUNAS, JESKEWITZ, MCCORMICK, SYKORA, FREESE and GUNDRUM, cosponsored by Senators PLACHE, BURKE, WIRCH, GROBSCHMIDT and ROSENZWEIG. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** the 1,700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity.

2 Whereas, in the first century after the resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour
3 Jesus Christ, Armenia was evangelized through the missionary efforts of His
4 Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and the seeds of Christian faith were sown in
5 the land; and

6 Whereas, in the year 301 A.D., by the grace of God and through the efforts of
7 St. Gregory the Illuminator and King Tiridates, Armenia became the first nation in
8 human history to adopt Christianity as its state religion; and

9 Whereas, the Armenian people cherish the memory of St. Gregory, a witness to
10 the Christian faith who overcame persecution and torture at the hands of pagans,
11 through whom the Eternal Truth of Christianity was revealed to King Tiridates and
12 the Armenian royal family; and

13 Whereas, after his conversion and baptism, Tiridates and St. Gregory traveled
14 throughout the country building churches and preaching the new faith to the people,
15 as a result of which Christianity took firm root in Armenia; and

1 Whereas, in the year 406, the monk St. Mesrob Mashdotz, with the support of
2 Catholicos Sahag and King Vramshabuh, devised a unique phonetic alphabet for the
3 Armenian language with which the Holy Bible and other religious texts were
4 rendered into Armenian, so that the tenets of Christianity could be taught to the
5 people; and

6 Whereas, the 5th century Armenian translation of the Bible is so beautifully
7 rendered and so faithful to the earliest exemplars that it has been termed the “Queen
8 of Translations” by biblical scholars; and

9 Whereas, in the year 451 A.D., an invasion from Persia which threatened to
10 return Armenia to pagan worship was heroically resisted by St. Vartan Mamigonian
11 who, with 1,036 comrades, was martyred for the sake of Christ on the field of
12 Avarayr; and

13 Whereas, in 484 A.D., the Armenians finally achieved victory over the Persians
14 in the first war fought in defense of Christianity, and signed the Treaty of Nvarsak
15 which allowed them to worship freely according to the tenets of the Christian faith;
16 and

17 Whereas, the exquisitely beautiful and divinely inspired artistic creations of
18 the Armenian Church in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, liturgical
19 music, and sacred literature comprise a permanent and noteworthy contribution of
20 the Armenians to world culture; and

21 Whereas, the Armenian people have remained steadfast in their Christian
22 faith throughout the past 1,700 years, despite martyrdom, persecution, massacres,
23 and genocide in Turkey, and official atheism in the Soviet Union; and

24 Whereas, for the past 1,700 years, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been the
25 unshakeable anchor of the Armenian people throughout the world; and

1 Whereas, in the past half century the Armenian Apostolic Church, as an
2 autocephalous branch of Oriental Orthodox Christianity, has played a leading role
3 in international ecumenical dialogue that seeks to reconcile Christian
4 denominations throughout the world; and

5 Whereas, Armenians began arriving in America as early as 1619, bringing with
6 them their faith and love of God, and, beginning in 1898, established numerous
7 churches from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, where they could worship freely
8 according to their tradition; and

9 Whereas, for over a century, Armenians fleeing religious and political
10 persecution have sought refuge in Wisconsin, where they have lived in freedom,
11 practiced their faith, and contributed to the progress of this state in every field of
12 endeavor; and

13 Whereas, the year 2001 represents the 1,700th anniversary of the adoption of
14 Christianity by the Armenian nation; and

15 Whereas, on October 13, 2001, the 4 parishes of the Armenian Apostolic Church
16 in Wisconsin, Holy Resurrection of South Milwaukee, St. Mesrob of Racine, St.
17 Hagop of Racine, and St. John the Baptist of Greenfield, will celebrate the Feast of
18 the Holy Translators, through whose efforts the Armenian nation was evangelized;
19 now, therefore, be it

20 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
21 legislature designates October 13, 2001, as “Armenian Christianity Day,” to be
22 observed by all citizens of Wisconsin as homage to the 1,700–year Christian heritage
23 of the Armenian people.

24 **(END)**