

2001 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 72

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

2 Whereas, in the first century, Armenia was evangelized through the missionary
3 efforts of the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and the seeds of Christian faith
4 were sown in the land; and

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

8 Whereas, the Armenian people cherish the memory of St. Gregory, a witness to
9 the Christian faith who overcame persecution and torture, by whom Christianity
10 was revealed to King Tiridates and the Armenian royal family; and

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

14 Whereas, in the year 406, the monk St. Mesrob Mashdotz, with the support of
15 Catholicos Sahag and King Vramshabuh, devised a unique phonetic alphabet for the

1 Armenian language with which the Holy Bible and other religious texts were
2 rendered into Armenian, so that the tenets of Christianity could be taught to the
3 people; and

4 Whereas, in the year 451 A.D., an invasion from Persia which threatened
5 Armenian worship was heroically resisted by St. Vartan Mamigonian who, with
6 1,036 comrades, was martyred on the field of Avarayr; and

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

11 Whereas, the exquisitely beautiful and inspired artistic creations of the
12 Armenian Church in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, liturgical music,
13 and sacred literature comprise a permanent and noteworthy contribution of the
14 Armenians to world culture; and

15 Whereas, the Armenian people have remained steadfast in their Christian
16 faith throughout the past 1,700 years, despite martyrdom, persecution, massacres,
17 and genocide; and

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

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

24 Whereas, Armenians began arriving in America as early as 1619, bringing with
25 them their faith, and, beginning in 1898, established numerous churches from the

1 Atlantic coast to the Pacific, where they could worship freely according to their
2 tradition; and

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

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

9 Whereas, on October 13, 2001, the 4 parishes of the Armenian Apostolic Church
10 in Wisconsin, Holy Resurrection of South Milwaukee, St. Mesrob of Racine, St.
11 Hagop of Racine, and St. John the Baptist of Greenfield, will celebrate the Feast of
12 the Holy Translators, by whose efforts the Armenian nation was evangelized; now,
13 therefore, be it

14 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
15 legislature designates October 13 of each year as “Armenian Christianity Day,” to be
16 observed as recognition of the 1,700–year Christian heritage of the Armenian people.

17 (END)