



News Statement

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Board Member Scott Schmerelson and the LAUSD Board Standing with the Armenian People and the Republic of Artsakh

The Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education today unanimously adopted an emergency resolution, authored by Board Member Scott Schmerelson, condemning Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia.

“I am pleased that my colleagues joined me in calling out the outrageous and immoral attack on Armenia,” said Schmerelson, who represents the LAUSD’s Third Board District. “Innocent Armenian civilians are dying as a result of this unprovoked attack on their country by Azerbaijan. It is important for people around the world to condemn the outrageous aggression.”

The resolution was co-sponsored by LAUSD Board Members Jackie Goldberg and Kelly Gonez and states that “on September 26, 2020 Azerbaijan’s military forces launched a deadly and unprovoked attack against the Republic of Artsakh, including that country’s capital city, Stepanakert.” The invasion of the mostly Armenian region is a “direct threat not only to the Armenian population that has lived in Artsakh for millennia, but also to regional stability fundamental to United States’ interests.”

Schmerelson pointed out that Turkey has applauded the attack by Azerbaijan forces, and has long sought control of that territory.

“Turkey has never acknowledged its brutal attempt to ethnically cleanse the Armenian people, and has long sought to expand territorially into the Republic of Artsakh,” stated Schmerelson. “The world must stand with the Armenian people as they are once again under attack.”

The resolution, “Standing with the Armenian People and the Republic of Artsakh” reminds the public that the government of the Republic of Turkey killed some 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children from 1919 to 1923 in what is now known as The Armenian Genocide. It goes on to call out the continued refusal by Turkey to ever take responsibility for the Armenian Genocide, considered by many to have given Hitler and Nazi Germany the idea for the Jewish Holocaust.

Board Member Schmerelson and his colleagues also called upon the California State Teachers Retirement Fund (CalSTRS) to divest from any and all holdings, debt securities, global equities and currency investments by the Republic of Turkey for their continuation of a campaign of genocide against the Armenian people.

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"I continue to support the Armenian community in its efforts to make the world remember the genocide by the Turks," Board Member Jackie Goldberg, a co-sponsor said. "And, I join with all who want to see the military invasion of Armenia end immediately, beginning with the cease-fire that is being ignored by Azerbaijan."

"I am proud to co-sponsor this resolution to stand in solidarity with our Armenian families in Board District 6 and throughout Southern California," stated Board Member Kelly Gonez, another co-sponsor of the resolution. "The people of Artsakh have endured displacement, segregation and other human rights abuses for far too long. We call on the Trump administration to condemn Azerbaijan's aggression and Turkey's involvement and take immediate steps to broker peace in the region."

"It is important to affirm the history, lived experiences and events that impact the students that we serve," Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III, another co-sponsor of the resolution, said. "Our Armenian students are a single example of the immense diversity that exists among our student body and we want to acknowledge the significance of their history."

"Azerbaijan's unprovoked aggression in the Republic of Artsakh and Armenia amidst a global pandemic is unacceptable and must stop," Board Member Nick Melvoin said. "The US must call for an immediate ceasefire and require that Turkey stop destabilizing the region with its direct support of Azerbaijan's offensive. We stand by our Armenian students and educators and call for peace and self-determination for the people of Artsakh."

"We welcome students and families from all over the world," Superintendent Austin Beutner said. "It is important to provide a safe and supporting learning environment for all students."

"We have to do more to support our Armenian-American students and their achievement at L.A. Unified," Board Member Mónica García said. "Recognizing and educating all students of the Armenian genocide is about acknowledgement, compassion, and the future in LA and beyond."

"We must never forget the horrors of genocide we have witnessed throughout history," added Board Member Schmerelson. "LA Unified has a robust curriculum on the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust. I urge every Social Studies and English teacher in our schools to be sure that they are teaching their students this curriculum. We must never forget."

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