

Representative Josh Harder
131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 9, 2019

Dear Representative Harder:

We write to express our strong support for House Resolution 537 which calls for formal recognition of the Assyrian Genocide. We appreciate your leadership in advancing this important legislation.

As the legislation you have sponsored recognizes, hundreds of thousands of Assyrians were subjected to a systematic campaign of massacre, torture, abduction, deportation, impoverishment, and cultural and ethnic destruction. It is estimated that at least 300,000 Assyrians perished during the genocide—a number that represented more than half the Assyrian population at the time.

Historical injustices against the Assyrian people have lasting consequences that threaten their future. The effects of the Assyrian Genocide outlasted the violence, leading to transgenerational trauma, the dispossession of Assyrian lands and identity, the ruination and disintegration of Assyrian social and religious structures, and the forced and often permanent separation of Assyrian families which continues today as a result of incessant persecution. Tragically, as acknowledged in H.Res.537, Assyrians continue to endure genocidal violence, persecution, and discrimination in their homeland today. As such, the Assyrian Genocide stands as an important reminder that crimes against humanity must not go without recognition, condemnation, and resolution.

Stopping the cycle of genocide begins with speaking truthfully about past genocides. Denial of the Assyrian Genocide absolves the perpetrators, prolongs strained relationships between different ethnic and religious groups, trivializes the suffering of the Assyrian people, and contributes to the erasure of their history. Further, impunity emboldens those who would commit genocide.

H.Res.537 is unprecedented in the sense that it highlights the unique suffering of the Assyrian people, which is often relegated in discourse and legislation concerning the Ottoman Empire's genocidal campaigns due to the fact that it coincided with the Armenian Genocide.

By formally recognizing the Assyrian Genocide, the United States can pay tribute to the perseverance and determination of those who survived, as well as members of the Assyrian-American community who have been deeply affected by these tragedies. Proper commemoration and condemnation of these crimes would signify the United States' commitment to victims of genocide and acknowledge its responsibility to help prevent future atrocities.

We applaud your efforts on behalf of the Assyrian-American community, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important legislative initiative.

Signed,



Jon Koriel
Chairman