

A MEMORIAL

COMMENDING THE LONG-STANDING TRADITIONS OF TOLERANCE,
INCLUSION AND INTERFAITH HARMONY IN THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN.

WHEREAS, the Republic of Azerbaijan is a staunch ally
and partner of the United States in a strategically important
south Caucasus region bordering Iran, Russia, Turkey and
Central Asia; and

WHEREAS, having ancient traditions of tolerance and
inclusion, Azerbaijan offers an environment where Muslims,
Jews and Christians enjoy peaceful coexistence and live in
dignity and harmony and with respect for each other; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan was home to one of the earliest
Christian nations in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Christian community has helped to shape
Azerbaijan's history through the ages, and today, this
community remains an important and vibrant part of Azerbaijani
culture and society; and

WHEREAS, living alongside the Christian and Muslim
communities is a thriving Jewish community of about thirty
thousand people that also has a long heritage in Azerbaijan,
dating back more than two thousand years; and

WHEREAS, over the centuries, when Jews in the
surrounding regions found themselves persecuted, Azerbaijan

was a haven for them, and during World War II, many European Jews escaping Nazi persecution found shelter in Azerbaijan; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish community has been an integral part of Azerbaijan's economic, cultural and political life, and today, synagogues and Jewish schools flourish in the country; and

WHEREAS, it is no coincidence that Azerbaijan is one of the few secular countries with a predominately Muslim population that maintains close, friendly ties with the state of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the three major religions have prospered not only because of the age-old respect and tolerance of the Azerbaijani people, but also because of the important role the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan has played in constantly fostering an environment of tolerance, mutual acceptance and respect in the country; and

WHEREAS, since the very beginning of its independence, Azerbaijan has created an environment that nurtures and promotes the ancient traditions of tolerance and rejects radicalism, extremism and hatred; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan sees diversity as one of the country's great strengths and virtues and has worked to ensure that this diversity continues to blossom; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has recently built and rebuilt

churches and synagogues and has created new cultural centers for different faiths and has supported all three religions financially without discrimination, all the while making sure that Christians and Jews are represented in all three branches of the government in Azerbaijan; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has repeatedly, over the course of the last decade, brought together religious leaders from the region and from around the world to promote interfaith dialogue, providing an example that is sorely needed; and

WHEREAS, in May 2015, Azerbaijan will host the third world forum on intercultural dialogue; and

WHEREAS, the United States has an interest in such a success story, since Azerbaijan – secular, tolerant, and inclusive – is crucial to a region ridden with hatred and strife; and

WHEREAS, given the rising levels of radicalism, terrorism, hate, xenophobia and intolerance in the world, it is important for the United States to support its tolerant and secular friends, and it considers the Azerbaijani model of interfaith acceptance and community engagement as a functioning example and encourages this policy around the world;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it recognize and commend the long-standing traditions of tolerance and

inclusion in Azerbaijan and commend the efforts by Azerbaijan to foster interfaith harmony, which can be a model and functioning example in these troubled times; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the president of the United States, the United States secretary of state, the United States ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan, the president pro tempore of the United States senate, the speaker of the United States house of representatives and New Mexico's congressional delegation.