

1 A MEMORIAL

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

5
6 WHEREAS, the Republic of Azerbaijan is a staunch ally
7 and partner of the United States in a strategically important
8 south Caucasus region bordering Iran, Russia, Turkey and
9 Central Asia; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has recently built and rebuilt

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

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

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

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

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

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
24 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it recognize and commend the
25 long-standing traditions of tolerance and inclusion in

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

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

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