



A Vote Without Consequences

**Fifty-One Years of Symbolic Politics in Washington,
the Documented Failure of Non-Binding Legislation on the
Armenian Cause,
and the Case for Building the Record That Produces Binding
Law**

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Executive Summary

On July 22, 2026, the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted 44-7 to adopt an amendment declaring that Azerbaijan *should* immediately and unconditionally release all Armenian prisoners of war and political prisoners. Within hours, headlines across the Armenian-American press announced that the United States Congress had acted on behalf of the Armenian hostages held in Baku. This white paper examines what actually happened, and what has actually happened every time a similar headline has appeared over the past fifty-one years.

The findings are not ambiguous. The amendment was a non-binding “sense of Congress” provision. Its enforcement language, directing the use of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and Global Magnitsky sanctions, was stripped before adoption at the request of the committee chairman. The bill to which the surviving sentence was attached then failed in the same committee and will never reach the House floor, the Senate, or the President. No sanction was imposed. No aid was suspended. No deadline was set. Not one hostage came home because of it.

This is not an isolated disappointment. It is the latest cycle of a pattern that this paper documents in full:

- **In fifty-one years (1975-2026), Congress has enacted exactly two binding Armenian-issue statutes**, Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act (1992) and Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act (1996). Both were neutralized by presidential waivers. Section 907 was waived every year from 2002 through 2022, was allowed to lapse briefly by executive choice, and was reinstated on August 8, 2025, the same day as the White House peace summit. Section 620I was waived the single time it was triggered, in 1997, and has never been applied since.
- **Every other measure that passed was non-binding.** Two House remembrance-day resolutions (1975, 1984) died in the Senate. The celebrated 2019 genocide-recognition votes, H.Res. 296 (405-11) and S.Res. 150 (unanimous consent), were answered within days by the State Department: “The position of the Administration has not changed.”
- **Every measure with teeth was killed.** Recognition resolutions were filibustered (1990), pulled from the floor minutes before a vote at a president's request (2000), and shelved after committee victories (2007, 2010). The Armenian Protection Act of 2023 (S. 3000), a binding suspension of the Section 907 waiver, passed by the United States Senate unanimously two months after the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, was killed by simple inaction in the House. Twelve Azerbaijan-accountability measures introduced between 2023 and 2026 produced zero enacted laws.
- **The results speak for themselves.** All fifty states have recognized the Armenian Genocide; ten recognized the Republic of Artsakh. Yet the United States has never imposed a single sanction on Azerbaijan or any Azerbaijani official for the blockade of Artsakh, its ethnic cleansing, or the imprisonment

and show trials of its leadership. Artsakh itself was erased from the map while the resolutions accumulated.

The second half of this paper demonstrates that the problem is not that American legislation cannot work. It is that *non-binding* legislation cannot work. Six documented precedents, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, the 1975-78 Turkey arms embargo, the Magnitsky Acts, the Taiwan Relations Act, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, and the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, show that when Congress writes “shall” and “may not” into law and attaches something of value, foreign governments change their behavior: more than 1.5 million Soviet Jews freed; 583 Magnitsky designations across fifty countries; \$3.7 billion in forced-labor goods stopped at American ports; apartheid's statutory checklist, including the release of Nelson Mandela, fulfilled within five years.

Every one of those precedents began the same way: with documented evidence physically placed in the hands of policymakers, attached to a specific binding demand, delivered persistently, and reinforced by constituents. That is precisely what the Armenian cause has never systematically done, and it is precisely what Global Peace International's **1,000 Book Initiative** is built to do: a numbered, professionally prepared Congressional Briefing Package of documented books, a white paper, and a policy brief, delivered to all 450 targeted House and Senate offices, followed by briefings, convenings, and a standing evidentiary record, so that when the next political window opens, the Armenian case is legislatively ready.

The message of this paper is not that the 44-7 vote was worthless. It is that the vote was a first step that has been sold, for fifty-one years, as a destination. Remembrance without remedy is not justice. It is time to move from statements about what Azerbaijan *should* do to laws governing what the United States *shall* do.

Part I. The Latest “Victory”: What Congress Really Did About the Armenian Hostages

A striking headline circulated throughout the Armenian community in July 2026: the House Foreign Affairs Committee, it announced, had called for Azerbaijan's immediate release of the Armenian hostages.¹ An earlier release, issued after the June markup, went further, describing bipartisan committee action “demanding” that Azerbaijan release the hostages.² Anyone reading only the headlines could reasonably conclude that the United States Congress had taken concrete action, that Azerbaijan had been formally ordered to release the prisoners, or that consequences would follow if President Ilham Aliyev refused.

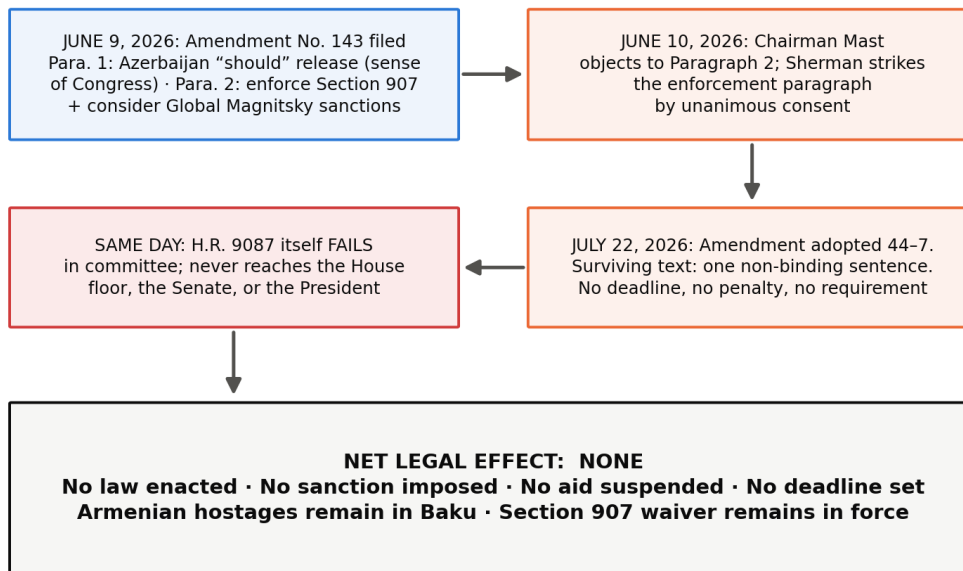
None of those conclusions is correct.

Something politically significant did happen. Forty-four members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a bipartisan supermajority of one of the most consequential committees in Congress, supported language calling for the release of Armenian prisoners. That expression of support should be acknowledged, and the members who provided it should be thanked.

But nothing legally binding happened. No sanctions were imposed. No American assistance was suspended. No deadline was established. No enforcement mechanism was created. No legal obligation was placed on the executive branch. And the fact most often left out of the celebration is this: the legislation to which the amendment was attached failed in committee the very same day.

The Armenian people deserve to understand the difference between a favorable headline and enforceable congressional action. This Part reconstructs the entire episode from the official record.

Figure 1. Anatomy of a “victory”: Sherman Amendment No. 143 to H.R. 9087 (119th Congress)



What the committee actually adopted

The vehicle was H.R. 9087, an omnibus State Department authorities bill introduced by Committee Chairman Brian Mast (R-FL) on June 2, 2026, and marked up by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on June 9–10, with recorded votes held on July 22.³

Representative Brad Sherman (D-CA) filed Amendment No. 143 to that bill on June 9. As filed, the amendment contained two paragraphs. The first declared the sense of Congress that Azerbaijan should immediately and unconditionally release all Armenian prisoners of war and political prisoners. The second declared that the United States should employ “all appropriate diplomatic, economic, and legal tools, including the full enforcement of section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and consideration of Global Magnitsky sanctions,” to secure that release.⁴

The complete operative language that survived to a vote is one sentence:

“It is the sense of Congress that Azerbaijan should immediately and unconditionally release all Armenian prisoners of war and political prisoners.”

That is the substance of the measure. It does not say that the President **shall** impose sanctions. It does not say that American military assistance **may not** be provided to Azerbaijan. It does not prohibit arms transfers, suspend diplomatic benefits, require visa bans, freeze assets, or establish conditions that Azerbaijan must satisfy. The distinction is not technical trivia. It determines whether a measure is enforceable or merely expressive.

The stronger enforcement language was removed to win passage

The history of the amendment is instructive, because the version that was filed was materially stronger than the version that passed.

At the June 10 session, Chairman Mast objected to the second paragraph, the one that named actual tools: Section 907 enforcement and Global Magnitsky sanctions. Representative Sherman agreed to strike that paragraph by unanimous consent. The chairman then offered his support for what remained, remarking that he would “love to work with you further on this amendment and possibly dividing it up.”⁵

Even the stricken paragraph was itself couched inside a sense-of-Congress provision, “should employ,” not “shall employ,” and therefore would not necessarily have compelled enforcement on its own. But its removal made the final amendment significantly weaker still. The surviving language does not even identify what the United States should *do* if Azerbaijan refuses. It simply expresses the view that Azerbaijan should release the prisoners.

This is not a new pattern. Ten months earlier, at the September 2025 markup of the FY2026 State Department authorization, the same committee had adopted symbolic amendments on Armenian prisoners and cultural heritage, while defeating, 26–24, Representative Sherman's amendment to actually enforce Section 907.⁶ The committee will vote for sympathy. It will not, so far, vote for enforcement.

“Sense of Congress” means non-binding

The amendment is explicitly labeled a “sense of Congress” provision. The House Office of Legislative Counsel, which assists Congress in drafting legislation, describes a sense-of-Congress provision as a means of expressing congressional views when Congress is not adopting new binding law; its drafting guidance distinguishes such provisions from statutes that require, prohibit, or authorize governmental action.⁷

In practical terms, a sense-of-Congress provision is a statement of opinion. It may carry political or diplomatic weight. It may be quoted by lawmakers, advocates, journalists, diplomats, and human-rights organizations. It may help build support for stronger measures later. But it does not create a legal command.

The word “**should**” is equally important. The amendment says Azerbaijan *should* release the prisoners. It does not say that any United States official *shall* take action if Azerbaijan refuses. There is no penalty for noncompliance because the amendment contains no requirement that can be violated.

The committee is not the Congress

The headline also risks giving readers the impression that the United States Congress adopted the measure. It did not. The vote was taken by the House Foreign

Affairs Committee: 44 in favor, 7 opposed, with the opposition consisting entirely of Republican members.⁸ The full House of Representatives never voted on it. The Senate never saw it. The President never signed it.

Representative Sherman's statement that the vote placed "Congress on the record" should therefore be understood as political language. More precisely, it placed the participating members of one House committee on the record. That is valuable, but it is not an act of Congress. For legislation to become law, it must pass the House, pass the Senate in the same form, and be presented to the President. None of that occurred here, and none of it can now occur, for the simplest of reasons.

The bill itself failed

After adopting the Sherman amendment, the committee voted on whether H.R. 9087, as amended, should be reported favorably to the full House. It was not. The bill, freighted with unrelated and contested provisions that Democratic members described as injecting "culture wars into the State Department" and making permanent the dismantling of USAID, failed to command a majority, by a recorded vote of 23–28.⁹

Therefore the amendment was attached to a bill that did not advance out of committee. It was not sent to the House floor. It did not proceed to the Senate. It did not become law, and it cannot.

Even ANCA's own celebratory release conceded the point, near its conclusion: "While H.R. 9087 did not clear the Committee in its current form, the Sherman amendment's adoption puts the influential congressional panel on record in support of the immediate release of Armenian hostages."¹⁰ That critical fact, the death of the vehicle itself, received far less emphasis than the headline announcing the committee's "call." Other outlets omitted it entirely, reporting only that the committee had "advanced" the measure.¹¹

Can the amendment be enforced? No.

A prisoner or family member cannot go into an American court and ask a judge to enforce this amendment. A court cannot order Azerbaijan to release the detainees based upon it. Nor can a court compel the President or the Secretary of State to impose sanctions that Congress never required. The amendment:

- creates no legally enforceable right;
- imposes no statutory duty on any United States official;
- establishes no deadline;
- authorizes no lawsuit;
- identifies no enforcement agency;
- imposes no sanction or penalty;

- restricts no funding;
- suspends no weapons transfer or military assistance.

Azerbaijan can ignore it without suffering any automatic legal consequence. That is the difference between a political statement and enforceable legislation.

Meanwhile, in Baku: the people the amendment is about

The stakes of this distinction are measured in human lives. As of March 2025, Azerbaijan officially acknowledged holding twenty-three Armenian prisoners, a figure the European Parliament cited when it condemned the “sham trials” underway in Baku by a vote of 453–31.¹²

On February 5, 2026, the Baku Military Court sentenced fifteen Armenian defendants, collectively charged with more than 2,500 counts including “genocide,” “slavery,” and “financing of terrorism,” in proceedings that international human-rights organizations described as show trials. Former Artsakh president Arayik Harutyunyan, former foreign minister David Babayan, former parliament speaker Davit Ishkhanyan, and former defense commanders Levon Mnatsakanyan and David Manukyan received life sentences. Former presidents Bako Sahakyan and Arkadi Ghukasyan each received twenty years.¹³

On February 17, 2026, philanthropist and former Artsakh state minister Ruben Vardanyan, tried separately on more than forty counts, was sentenced to twenty years. Amnesty International called the proceedings “nothing short of a travesty.”¹⁴

Four detainees were released in a January 14, 2026 exchange, framed by Baku and Washington as a confidence-building measure of the peace process; roughly sixteen to nineteen known detainees remain, including the entire former political leadership of Artsakh.¹⁵ Azerbaijan has expelled the International Committee of the Red Cross, the only independent body with access to the detainees.¹⁶

And when the President of the United States hosted Presidents Aliyev and Pashinyan at the White House on August 8, 2025, to initial a peace framework and announce a 99-year American development corridor across Syunik, the prisoners were omitted from the deal entirely, as ANCA's own congressional memo acknowledged the same day. That same day, the President signed the determination waiving Section 907 once again.¹⁷

This is the context in which a non-binding, one-sentence committee amendment, attached to a dead bill, was presented to the Armenian community as Congress “demanding” the hostages' release.

Part II. “Should” Versus “Shall”: The Anatomy of Real Legislation

The difference between the amendment that was celebrated in July 2026 and a law that would actually free prisoners is not a matter of degree. It is a difference in kind, visible in the text itself, before a single vote is cast. Members of Congress, their staffs, and the advocacy organizations that ask for their votes all know this distinction intimately. The public deserves to know it too.

The grammar of binding law

Binding legislation uses terms such as **“shall,” “must,”** and **“may not.”** It identifies the responsible official, states what that official is required or prohibited from doing, and specifies what happens if conditions are not met. It conditions something of real value (money, weapons, market access, visas, trade status) on verifiable behavior. And it survives the news cycle, because it sits in the United States Code where every future administration must confront it.

Non-binding legislation (simple resolutions, concurrent resolutions, sense-of-Congress provisions, commemorative designations) expresses an opinion. However eloquent, it commands no one, spends nothing, prohibits nothing, and expires in effect the moment the vote is gavelled.

Table 1. The two vocabularies of Congress

Element	Symbolic measure (what the Armenian cause has received)	Binding statute (what results require)
Operative verb	“should,” “urges,” “calls upon,” “expresses the sense”	“shall,” “must,” “may not,” “is prohibited”
Addressee	A foreign government, or no one	A named U.S. official (the President, the Secretary of State, the Commissioner of CBP)
Trigger	None	A certification, determination, finding, or evidentiary presumption
Consequence	None	Aid cutoff, import ban, asset freeze, visa denial, loss of trade status
Deadline	None	Statutory (e.g., a determination due within 120 days)
Waiver	Nothing to waive	Defined and limited, or absent
Life span	One news cycle	Permanent until amended or repealed

Element	Symbolic measure (what the Armenian cause has received)	Binding statute (what results require)
Example	H.Res. 296 (2019); Sherman Amendment No. 143 (2026)	Jackson-Vanik (1975); Magnitsky Act (2012); UFLPA (2021)

Sources: House Legislative Counsel's Manual on Drafting Style; statutes cited in Part VI.

Why Congress produces symbolism instead

Symbolic measures are cheap. They cost the Treasury nothing, bind no committee chairman, threaten no defense contractor, complicate no ambassador's next meeting, and can be voted for by members who would never vote to cut off a strategic partner. For precisely those reasons, they pass easily, and for precisely those reasons, they change nothing. A resolution that no interest opposes is a resolution that no interest fears.

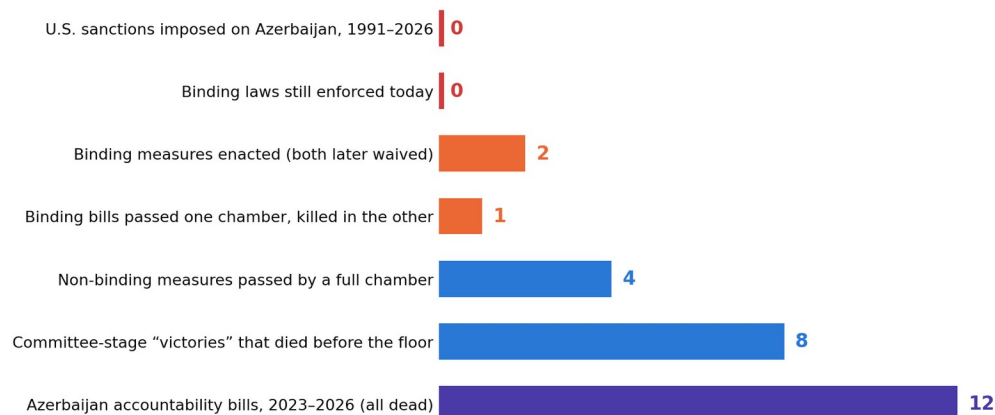
The record assembled in Part III shows what this asymmetry has produced over half a century: an abundant harvest of commemorations and expressions of concern, two binding statutes both promptly neutralized by waiver, and, at every moment when binding language approached passage, a decisive intervention by the executive branch, the leadership of a chamber, or a committee chairman to strip, stall, or kill it.

The July 2026 episode compressed the entire pattern into six weeks: enforcement language stripped in exchange for a chairman's support; a lopsided vote for the harmless remainder; a dead vehicle; a victory headline. The system worked exactly as it has worked since 1975. What has never been tried, systematically, office by office, with documents that staff can cite, is changing what Congress knows and what Congress is asked for. That is the subject of Parts VII and VIII.

Part III. The Fifty-One-Year Ledger: Every Measure, and What It Produced

This Part catalogs, as completely as the public record allows, every significant federal measure on the Armenian cause from 1975 through July 2026, what passed, what failed, and what each produced. The reader is invited to search this record for a single instance in which a non-binding measure, however celebrated, changed the conduct of Turkey or Azerbaijan, altered American policy, or improved the position of a single Armenian. We have not found one.

Figure 2. The 51-year congressional ledger on the Armenian case, 1975-2026



A. Non-binding measures that passed, and what followed

The two remembrance days (1975, 1984)

On April 8, 1975, the sixtieth anniversary year of the Genocide, the House of Representatives passed H.J.Res. 148, designating April 24, 1975 as a “National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man,” honoring “all the victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry who succumbed to the genocide perpetrated in 1915.” It was the first congressional passage of any Armenian Genocide measure. The Senate never voted on it. No presidential proclamation followed.¹⁸

Nine years later the House passed H.J.Res. 247 (September 10, 1984), designating April 24, 1985 in nearly identical terms. Again the Senate never acted; again nothing followed.¹⁹ For the next thirty-five years, no Armenian Genocide measure passed either chamber.

The 2019 recognition votes, the movement's crowning symbolic achievement

On October 29, 2019, the House passed H.Res. 296 (Rep. Adam Schiff), “Affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide,” by a vote of 405–11, the first full-chamber floor vote in American history recognizing the Genocide, 104 years

after the events. The resolution was, by design, a simple resolution with no force of law: it declared it the sense of the House to commemorate the Genocide, reject denial, and encourage education.²⁰

In the Senate, the companion S.Res. 150 (Sens. Robert Menendez and Ted Cruz) was blocked on the floor three times in November and December 2019 by Republican senators acting at the White House's explicit request, Sen. Lindsey Graham objecting hours after sitting in on President Trump's Oval Office meeting with President Erdoğan of Turkey. It finally passed by unanimous consent on December 12, 2019.²¹

Five days later, on December 17, 2019, the State Department disposed of both resolutions in a single sentence: **“The position of the Administration has not changed.”**²² Congress had spoken with near-unanimity, and the executive branch simply declined to follow. No policy, funding, or diplomatic consequence of any kind resulted. It could not have been otherwise: the resolutions were written to be incapable of requiring anything.

The reporting amendments (2022) and committee amendments (2025-2026)

In July 2022, the House adopted four ANCA-backed floor amendments to the FY2023 defense authorization, requiring reports on whether Section 907 waiver certifications were truthful, and on Azerbaijan's atrocities and its Armenian prisoners. All were reporting or sense-of-Congress provisions. American security assistance to Azerbaijan was not reduced by a dollar.²³

In September 2025, the House Foreign Affairs Committee adopted en-bloc amendments calling for the release of Armenian prisoners, protection of Armenian religious and cultural heritage, and the right of return of displaced Artsakh Armenians, the same markup at which it defeated actual Section 907 enforcement, 26-24. And in June-July 2026 came the Sherman amendment episode documented in Part I. As of this writing, none of these provisions has produced a release, a return, or a sanction.²⁴

Table 2. Non-binding measures that passed, 1975-2026

Measure	Year	What it said	What followed
H.J.Res. 148 (House)	1975	April 24 “National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man”	Died in Senate; no proclamation; no policy
H.J.Res. 247 (House)	1984	April 24, 1985 remembrance day	Died in Senate; administration opposed successors
H.Res. 296 (House, 405-11)	2019	Sense of House affirming the Armenian Genocide record	State Dept.: “position ... has not changed”

Measure	Year	What it said	What followed
S.Res. 150 (Senate, UC)	2019	Senate companion, after three White House-orchestrated blocks	Same; Section 907 waivers continued
4 NDAA floor amendments	2022	Reports on waiver certifications, atrocities, POWs	No aid reduced; no sanction
HFAC en-bloc amendments	2025	Prisoner release, heritage, right of return (sense/report language)	No release, return, or sanction; 907 enforcement defeated 26-24 same day
Sherman Amdt. 143 (HFAC, 44-7)	2026	Azerbaijan “should” free all Armenian prisoners	Enforcement ¶ stripped; vehicle died in committee 23-28

Committee-stage commemorations that never reached a floor vote (1984, 1985, 2005, 2014) are catalogued in Table 3.

B. The graveyard: measures with force, or headed for the floor, that were killed

The measures in this section were killed deliberately: filibustered, pulled, shelved, or starved. Their history refutes the comfortable assumption that the symbolic record reflects the limits of what was politically possible. At least five times, stronger action was within reach and was affirmatively prevented.

1985-1990: killed in the open

In 1985 and again in 1987, remembrance resolutions were reported to the House floor and destroyed there. In 1987, the House defeated the rule for consideration (H.Res. 238), so the measure never even received a direct vote, after the Reagan administration filed a formal statement of opposition. This was the same administration whose president had himself referred to “the genocide of the Armenians” in a 1981 proclamation.²⁵

In February 1990, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, whose life had been saved by an Armenian-American surgeon, Dr. Hampar Kelikian, brought S.J.Res. 212, the seventy-fifth-anniversary remembrance resolution, to the Senate floor over the objection of the George H.W. Bush administration. Sen. Robert Byrd led a filibuster. Cloture failed twice, 49-49 on February 22 and 51-48 on February 27, and Dole shelved the measure. The Senate has never since brought an Armenian Genocide remembrance resolution to a contested floor vote.²⁶

2000: pulled by the Speaker at the President's request

On October 3, 2000, the House International Relations Committee approved H.Res. 596, the Radanovich-Schiff affirmation resolution, 24-11. A floor vote was scheduled for October 19. That evening, President Clinton sent Speaker Dennis Hastert a letter

warning that passage “could have far-reaching negative consequences for the United States.” Hastert withdrew the resolution minutes before the vote.²⁷

2007 and 2010: committee victories, then burial

On October 10, 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved H.Res. 106 (Schiff) by 27–21, over President George W. Bush's personal public plea that morning and a letter from eight former secretaries of state. The resolution had 226 cosponsors: a majority of the House. Turkey recalled its ambassador the next day and threatened American access to Incirlik air base and Iraq supply routes. Within two weeks, dozens of members withdrew their cosponsorship; Speaker Pelosi, who had publicly promised a vote, never scheduled one.²⁸

On March 4, 2010, the same committee approved H.Res. 252 by a single vote, 23–22, despite a personal telephone call from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Chairman Howard Berman asking him not to proceed, and despite candidate Obama's written 2008 pledge: “as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide.” Turkey again recalled its ambassador; the administration publicly opposed a floor vote; none was ever held.²⁹

The pattern held in the Senate as well: S.Res. 410 (Menendez–Kirk) was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 2014 and simply never scheduled by the majority leader.³⁰

Table 3. Recognition measures actively killed, 1985–2014

Measure	Year	How far it got	How it died
H.J.Res. 192	1985	Reported in House	No floor vote
H.J.Res. 328	1986	Rule adopted; amendment fights	Left as “unfinished business”
H.J.Res. 132	1987	Reached the floor	House defeated the rule; Reagan admin. opposed
S.J.Res. 212 (Dole)	1990	Senate floor	Filibustered; cloture failed 49–49, 51–48
H.Res. 596	2000	Committee 24–11; floor scheduled	Pulled by Speaker Hastert on Clinton's letter, minutes before the vote
H.Res. 316 / H.Con.Res. 195	2005	Committee approved	Speaker never scheduled; died
H.Res. 106 (226 cosponsors)	2007	Committee 27–21	Turkey recalls ambassador; Pelosi never schedules; dies
H.Res. 252	2010	Committee 23–22	Clinton call, Turkish pressure; never scheduled

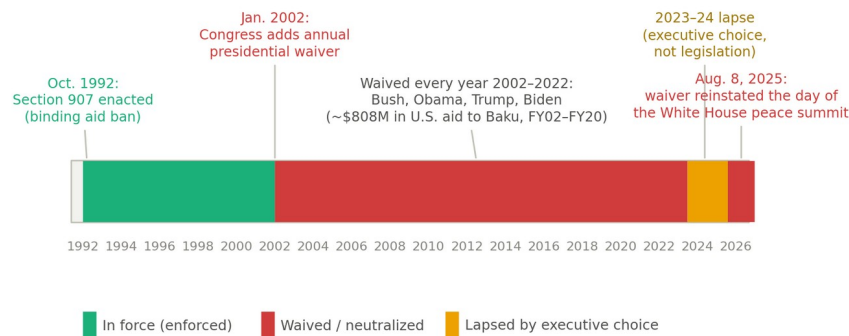
Measure	Year	How far it got	How it died
S.Res. 410	2014	SFRC approved	Majority leader never schedules; dies

Recognition resolutions are themselves non-binding; the record above shows that even symbolism was resisted whenever it might have carried diplomatic cost, and that committee passage has never been a reliable predictor of enactment.

C. Section 907: the one binding statute, and its twenty-four-year neutralization

In October 1992, Congress enacted the FREEDOM Support Act to govern assistance to the former Soviet republics. Section 907 prohibited United States government-to-government assistance to Azerbaijan until the President determines and reports to Congress that Azerbaijan “is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.” It is the only Armenia-specific binding restriction Congress has ever enacted.³¹

Figure 3. Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act: the only binding Armenian-issue statute, and its neutralization



For a decade it held. Then, in the weeks after September 11, 2001, Congress itself handed over the keys: the FY2002 foreign operations appropriations act granted the President authority to waive Section 907 annually, on national-security grounds, subject to certifications and reports.³²

Every president thereafter waived it, every year, for twenty-one consecutive years: George W. Bush (2002–2008), Barack Obama (2009–2016), Donald Trump (2017–2020), and Joe Biden (2021–2022), including the waiver President Biden signed on April 23, 2021, *one day before* becoming the first American president to formally recognize the Armenian Genocide, and the waiver he signed in June 2022, after Azerbaijan's 2020 war on Artsakh.³³

The cumulative result: the Government Accountability Office documented approximately **\$808 million** in total United States assistance to Azerbaijan in fiscal years 2002–2020, including more than \$100 million in security assistance in FY2018–2019 alone, while the “ban” nominally remained on the books. GAO also

found that administrations repeatedly failed even to submit the impact reports the waiver statute required.³⁴

Amid the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the Biden administration allowed the waiver to lapse after mid-2023, an act of executive discretion, not legislation. And on August 8, 2025, President Trump signed Presidential Determination No. 2025-08 reinstating the waiver, on the very day he hosted the Aliyev–Pashinyan peace summit at the White House. Sixty House members had written to the Secretary of State opposing the waiver months earlier; a letter has no article, section, or penalty. The waiver stands.³⁵

Section 620I: the second binding law, used once, waived once, abandoned

The Armenian-American community actually won a second binding statute: the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, championed by Rep. John Porter and Sen. Bob Dole and enacted permanently in 1996 as Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act. It requires the cutoff of security assistance and arms sales to any country that the President knows “prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance,” a provision aimed squarely at Turkey’s blockade of aid to Armenia.³⁶

In 1997, President Clinton acknowledged that Turkey was restricting American humanitarian aid to Armenia, triggering the statute, and exercised the national-interest waiver the same day, keeping assistance to Turkey flowing. No president has ever again made a finding under Section 620I, against any country, in nearly three decades.³⁷

This is the full binding harvest of fifty-one years of advocacy: two statutes, two waivers, zero enforcement.

D. 2020-2026: the pattern at maximum stakes

The final six years of the record are the most damning, because the stakes could not have been higher: a full-scale war on Artsakh (2020), a ten-month starvation blockade (2022–2023), the military conquest and ethnic cleansing of the entire territory, some 100,000 to 120,000 Armenians driven from their homes in a week (September 2023), followed by the state’s formal dissolution and the show trials of its leaders in Baku.

Congress’s response, measure by measure:

Table 4. Azerbaijan accountability measures, 2020-2026, complete outcome record

Measure	Year	What it would have done	Outcome
H.Res. 1165 (Speier)	2020	Condemn Azerbaijan’s war on Artsakh; denounce Turkish	Died in committee, the House took no floor

Measure	Year	What it would have done	Outcome
		interference (95 cosponsors)	action on the 2020 war at all
H.Res. 240	2021	Call on Azerbaijan to release all POWs and captured civilians	Never voted; died with the 117th Congress
H.Res. 108 (Schiff)	2023	Condemn the blockade; call for suspension of all U.S. aid to Azerbaijan	Died in committee
S.Res. 244 (Padilla-Rubio-Menendez)	2023	Condemn Lachin blockade; war-crimes investigation; suspend military assistance	Never voted; died
H.Res. 320 (Bilirakis)	2023	Recognize the Republic of Artsakh	Died in committee; Artsakh dissolved Jan. 1, 2024
S. 3000, Armenian Protection Act (Peters)	2023	BINDING: repeal the President's Section 907 waiver authority for FY2024-25	Passed the Senate UNANIMOUSLY, Nov. 15, 2023; House Foreign Affairs never gave it a markup or vote; died Jan. 3, 2025
H.R. 7288 (Lawler-Pallone-Bilirakis-Amo)	2024	House companion: stop military aid to Azerbaijan	Died in committee
H.R. 5683 / S. 2900	2023	Permanent 907 waiver repeal + Armenia assistance	Died in committee
H.R. 8141 (Titus-Bilirakis)	2024	REQUIRE a determination whether Azerbaijani officials meet Global Magnitsky criteria	Died in committee
S.Res. 540 (Markey-Cassidy)	2024	Privileged § 502B(c) resolution forcing a human-rights report on Azerbaijan	No floor action; died
H.Res. 1327	2024	Condemn the ethnic-cleansing campaign	Died in committee
H.R. 5369 (Titus-Bilirakis)	2025	Azerbaijan Sanctions Review Act (reintroduced)	In committee; no action as of July 2026
H.R. 6840 (Bilirakis-Pallone)	2025	ARMENIA Security Partnership Act: restrict 907 waivers absent concrete steps	In committee; no action
Sherman Amdt. 143 to H.R. 9087	2026	Sense of Congress: release the hostages (enforcement stripped)	Adopted 44-7; vehicle failed in committee

Sources: congress.gov bill records and sponsor releases cited in the endnotes; ANCA legislative tracker. See notes to this Part.

The centerpiece deserves emphasis. In November 2023, two months after the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, **every single United States senator** allowed S. 3000, the Armenian Protection Act, to pass by unanimous consent. It was a genuinely binding bill: it repealed the President's authority to waive Section 907 for two fiscal years. It then went to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which never scheduled so much as a markup. It died, without a vote, when the 118th Congress expired. With no statute in place, the next president resumed waiving Section 907 in August 2025.³⁸

And the result of the entire six-year period is this: **the United States has imposed no sanction of any kind on Azerbaijan or any Azerbaijani official: not one Global Magnitsky designation, not one visa ban, not one asset freeze**, for the blockade, the conquest, the ethnic cleansing, or the hostage-taking.³⁹

E. The presidential pattern: eight administrations, one playbook

The legislative record cannot be understood apart from the executive one. Every president since 1981 has followed substantially the same sequence: sympathetic words, often explicit campaign promises, followed by active suppression of binding or even symbolic congressional action once in office.

Table 5. Presidential words versus presidential deeds, 1981-2026

President	The words	The deeds
Reagan	Proclamation 4838 (April 22, 1981) refers to “the genocide of the Armenians”	His administration formally opposed the 1987 remembrance resolution; the House killed it
G.H.W. Bush	Endorsed recognition as a candidate (1988)	Administration lobbied against the 1990 Dole resolution; it was filibustered to death
Clinton	Sympathetic April 24 messages	Letter to Hastert kills H.Res. 596 minutes before the vote (2000); waives Section 620I for Turkey the day it was triggered (1997)
G.W. Bush	Campaign pledge to recognize (2000)	Never used the word; personally lobbied against H.Res. 106 (2007)
Obama	Written pledge: “as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide” (2008)	Never did; administration buried H.Res. 252 after its 23-22 committee win (2010); waived 907 annually
Trump (1st)	April 24 statements: “one of the worst mass atrocities”	White House orchestrated three Senate blocks of S.Res. 150 (2019); State declared recognition “not the

President	The words	The deeds
		position of the Administration”
Biden	First formal presidential recognition of the Genocide (April 24, 2021)	Signed the 907 waiver the day before (April 23, 2021); waived again 2022; zero sanctions for blockade and ethnic cleansing
Trump (2nd)	Peace-summit framing: peace “after 35 years of war” (Aug. 8, 2025)	Reinstated the 907 waiver the same day; prisoners omitted from the deal entirely

Sources cited throughout Parts I and III. The pattern is bipartisan, spans five decades, and is indifferent to which party controls the White House.

The lesson of Table 5 is not that presidents are uniquely faithless. It is structural: a president will always trade a cost-free symbolic gesture away, or veto-by-phone-call a merely symbolic measure, when a strategic partner objects. Only statute survives contact with an administration's regional interests. That is what statutes are for.

Part IV. The State-Level Mirror: Fifty Recognitions, Zero Consequences

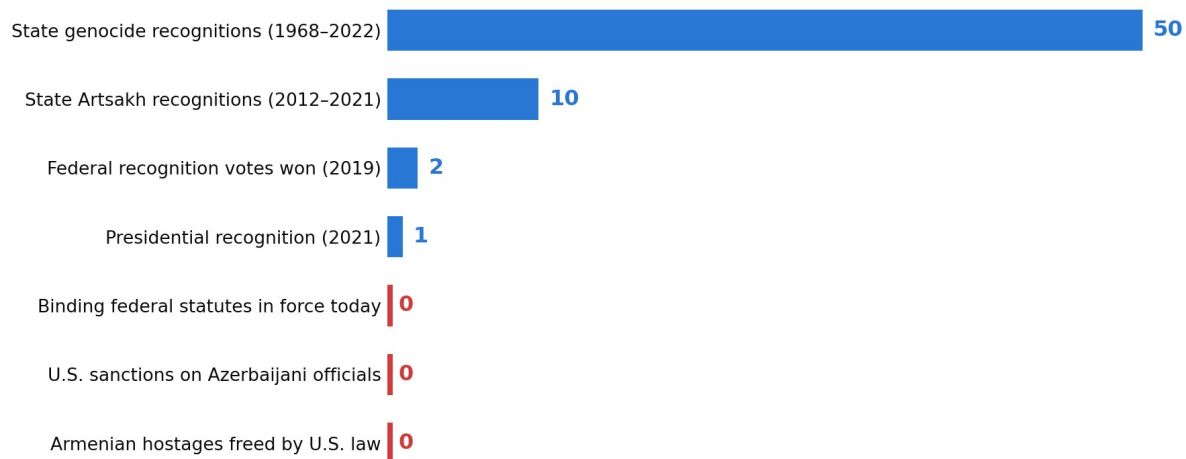
If symbolic recognition could ever have accumulated into policy, it would have done so at the state level, where the Armenian-American community has achieved literally everything it asked for. The record is worth stating precisely, because its very completeness is the proof of the argument.

All fifty states

Beginning with California in 1968 and ending with Mississippi in March 2022, a gubernatorial statement, after fifty-four years of campaigning, every state in the Union, plus the District of Columbia, has formally recognized the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁰ The Armenian press that celebrated each milestone was candid about their nature: these proclamations “are symbolic in nature and carry no foreign policy consequence.”⁴¹

Ten states went further, passing resolutions recognizing or calling for recognition of the independence of the Republic of Artsakh: Rhode Island and Massachusetts (2012), Maine and Louisiana (2013), California (2014), Georgia and Hawaii (2016), Michigan (2017), Colorado (2019), and New Jersey (2021).⁴²

Figure 8. Symbolic output vs. binding result, 1968–2026



What fifty recognitions purchased

Nothing. No federal statute followed. No sanction followed. Not one dollar of aid to Azerbaijan was interrupted. Federal recognition itself, when it finally came in 2019–2021, was, as Part III showed, expressly declared non-policy by the State Department and accompanied, within forty-eight hours, by another Section 907 waiver. And the Republic of Artsakh, recognized by ten American states, was blockaded, starved, conquered, emptied of its population, and formally dissolved on

January 1, 2024, recognized at the end by not a single sovereign state, including, tragically, the Republic of Armenia itself.⁴³

Even state-level “binding” measures were designed not to bind

California, home to the largest Armenian community in the nation, attempted binding economic measures exactly three times. AB 1597 (2018), requiring state pension divestment from Turkish government holdings, passed both chambers and was vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown as “mostly symbolic.” AB 1320 (2019), the Divest from Turkish Bonds Act, was signed, but its divestment mandate triggers only if the federal government first imposes sanctions on Turkey, which has never occurred; it has therefore moved essentially nothing. AB 1019 (2021) died without a hearing.⁴⁴

No state has enacted any divestment or sanctions measure against Azerbaijan at all.

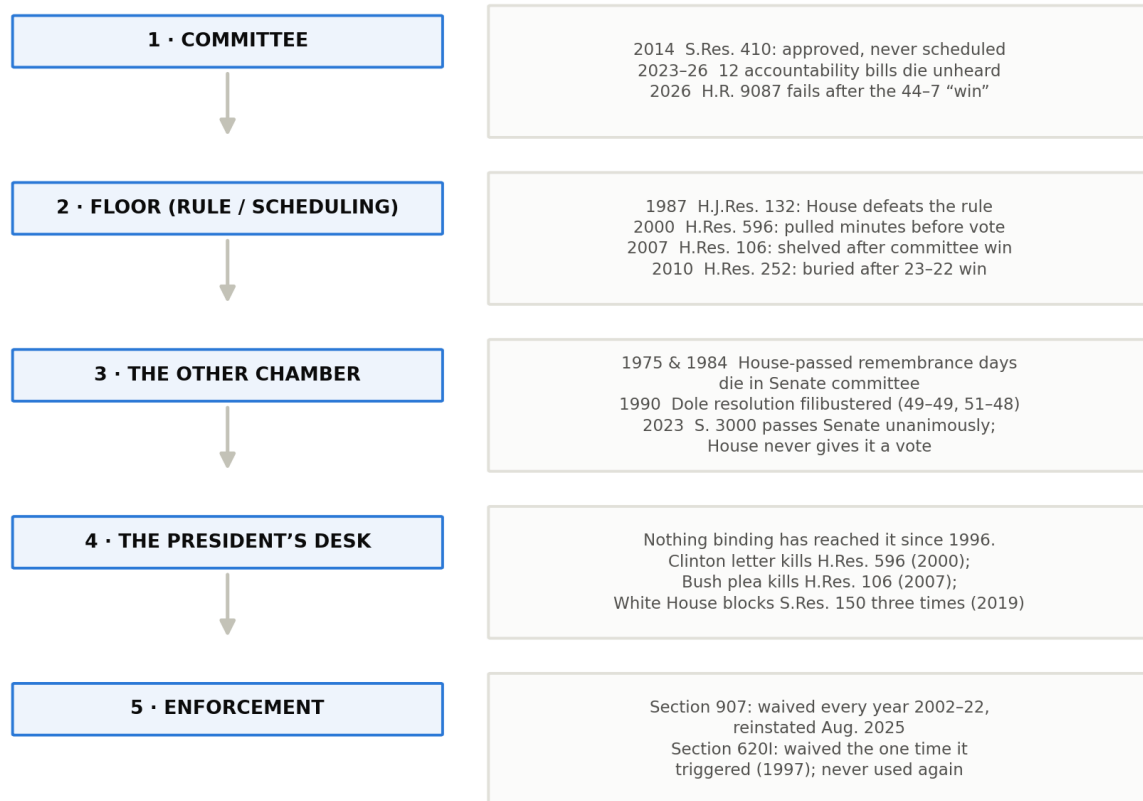
A cautionary tale inside the cautionary tale

The state record also contains a warning about victory claims themselves. In May 2020, Armenian media worldwide reported that Minnesota had become the eleventh state to recognize Artsakh. It had not: the resolution was introduced but never adopted, and the claim was formally rated false by fact-checkers, after which several outlets quietly deleted their stories.⁴⁵ A community trained to celebrate announcements will eventually celebrate announcements of things that never happened. The discipline this white paper urges (read the operative text, check the enacting clause, ask what is enforceable) applies to our own press releases first.

Part V. The Pattern: How Symbolic Politics Actually Works

Fifty-one years of evidence yield four recurring patterns. They are worth naming precisely, because each one is visible, in compressed form, in the July 2026 episode with which this paper began.

Figure 6. The five kill points: where every Armenian measure has died, 1975-2026



The committee-victory press release

2000: committee win 24-11, pulled from the floor. 2005: committee win, never scheduled. 2007: committee win 27-21, buried. 2010: committee win 23-22, buried. 2014: committee win, never scheduled. 2025: en-bloc symbolic amendments adopted; enforcement defeated the same day. 2026: amendment adopted 44-7, vehicle dead by nightfall. Committee passage is announced as victory; the measure then dies before the floor, in the other chamber, or in conference, or survives only after its operative language has been stripped. The press release never follows up.

The veto by phone call

No president has ever had to veto an Armenian-issue bill, because nothing binding has reached a president's desk since 1996. A letter (Clinton, 2000), a public plea

(Bush, 2007), a phone call to the chairman (Clinton to Berman, 2010), a request relayed to three senators (Trump White House, 2019), a chairman's objection at markup (Mast, 2026): each sufficed, because what was being killed was costless to kill. Symbolic measures do not merely fail to bind the executive; they offer the executive a cheap menu of interventions to prevent even symbolism.

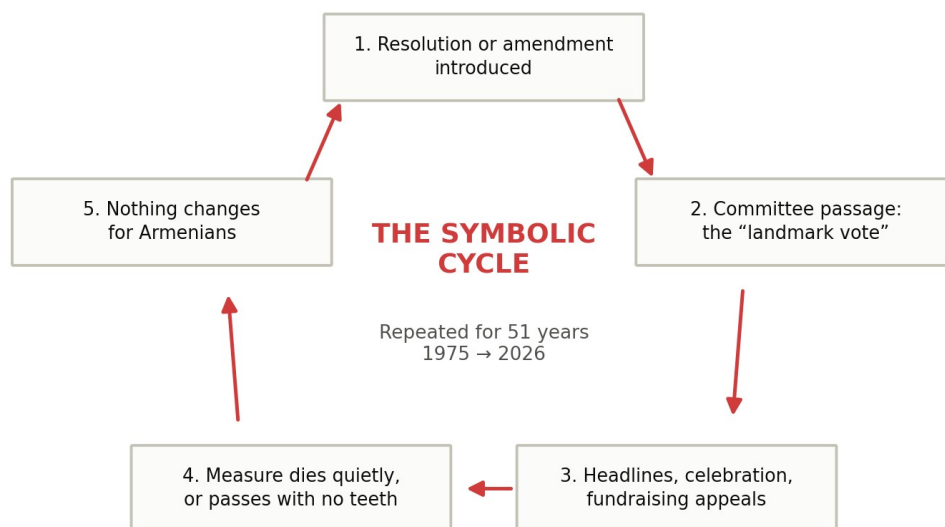
The waiver ratchet

On the two occasions Congress actually bound the executive, Section 907 (1992) and Section 620I (1996), the sequence was identical: the statute holds until it first threatens a strategic relationship; a waiver is inserted (2002) or invoked (1997); the waiver is then renewed indefinitely while the statute remains nominally “on the books,” available for citation in advocacy fundraising but never in enforcement. When Congress moved to remove the waiver with S. 3000, passed unanimously in the Senate, the other chamber declined even to vote. The ratchet turns one way.

Recognition as a substitute, not a foundation

The movement's crowning achievements, the 2019 congressional recognition votes and the 2021 presidential recognition, were followed within thirty months by the blockade of Artsakh, its ethnic cleansing, and its erasure, with zero American consequence. Recognition was supposed to be the foundation on which policy would be built. It has functioned instead as the substitute for policy: the thing offered, and accepted, in place of enforcement. Genocide recognition without genocide-consequences legislation turned out to be, precisely, remembrance without remedy.

Figure 7. The cycle the Armenian-American community has been asked to celebrate since 1975



Why the cycle persists

The cycle persists because every party to it profits, except the Armenians. Members of Congress harvest votes and goodwill from a passionate community at the price of a costless voice vote. Advocacy organizations demonstrate “wins” to donors (44-7!) without confronting the chairman who stripped the enforcement clause. The executive branch preserves its strategic relationships in Baku and Ankara undisturbed. Azerbaijan reads the true signal perfectly: it watched the United States respond to ethnic cleansing with a dead Senate bill and a reinstated waiver, and it has priced Armenian-American political power accordingly, at zero.⁴⁶

The price Armenians have paid

What half a century of the symbolic cycle has cost the Armenian-American community is not recorded in any single ledger. But the public record gives the scale, and the community deserves to see it stated plainly.

The two principal Washington advocacy organizations file annual reports with the Internal Revenue Service. Machine-readable filings begin only in 2010-2011; both organizations operated for decades before that, so every figure below understates the lifetime totals. In the documented years alone, the community gave these organizations more than seventy-eight million dollars.⁴⁷

Table 6. What the community gave: documented filings, FY2010-FY2023

Organization	Years	Raised	Spent
Armenian Assembly of America (Washington, DC)	FY2011-23	\$41.2M	\$44.8M
ANCA national office (Washington, DC)	FY2011-23	\$11.6M	\$10.4M
ANCA Endowment Fund	FY2010-23	\$14.5M	\$10.2M
ANCA Western Region entities and Eastern Region Endowment	FY2010-23	\$10.9M	\$10.0M
All six entities combined	FY2010-23	\$78.3M	\$75.3M
Registered federal lobbying within the above (ANCA 2004-25; Assembly 1999-25)	1999-2025	n/a	about \$6.5M
Dedicated Armenian-American PACs, entire documented history (both dormant since 2012)	1981-2012	<\$1M	<\$1M

Sources: IRS Form 990 filings via ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer; Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act database; FEC records. Full citations in the endnotes. Most 990 spending funds staff, education, media, and community programs, not registered lobbying; the \$6.5 million lobbying figure is the subset formally disclosed under the Lobbying Disclosure Act.

Some perspective on those numbers. The two flagship organizations together report roughly a quarter of a million dollars a year in registered federal lobbying. Azerbaijan spent over seven million dollars on registered foreign-agent lobbying and public-relations firms in Washington between 2015 and 2023 alone; in 2019 alone, Turkey spent \$3.6 million and Azerbaijan \$1.3 million on American lobbyists, while the Republic of Armenia spent nothing and retained no foreign-agent representation at all until 2023. The Armenian side of this fight has always been funded by the community itself, a diaspora of perhaps a million and a half people writing personal checks.⁴⁸

And the money is the smaller part of the price. No organization publishes volunteer-hour figures; ANCA describes “tens of thousands” of engaged advocates and chapters across all fifty states, but no one has ever counted the hours.⁴⁹ The April 24 marches every year for two generations. The phone banks. The bus rides to Washington. The letters, the petitions, the school presentations, the testimony. Millions of hours of unpaid devotion from people who believed, each time, that this resolution would be the one that mattered.

Seventy-eight million documented dollars, decades more before the records begin, and an uncountable ocean of volunteer labor purchased, under the resolution strategy: two binding statutes, both waived; zero sanctions; zero enforceable conditions; and a homeland erased while the certificates of recognition accumulated on the wall. The generosity was never the problem. The

community's money and hours were real. The product they were spent on was not. That is the case for spending the next dollar differently.

The community is the only participant paying full price: in donations, in electoral loyalty, in decades of organizing energy, and in the currency that matters most, the lives and lands the resolutions were supposed to protect. Breaking the cycle does not require abandoning Congress. It requires changing what we ask Congress for, and arming Congress with what it needs to grant it. The next two Parts show that this has been done before, repeatedly, by communities no larger or wealthier than ours, and exactly how.

Part VI. When Congress Binds: Six Precedents That Produced Results

The preceding Parts could be read as counsel of despair: if Washington is structurally incapable of enforcing anything on behalf of Armenians, why continue? The answer is that Washington is not structurally incapable. Congress has repeatedly imposed binding, enforceable conditions on foreign governments, over the objection of presidents, secretaries of state, and industrial lobbies, and those conditions changed the world. What follows are six documented cases. Each is chosen because it began, as the Armenian cause must now begin, with an organized community or a documented case file, and ended in the United States Code rather than the Congressional Record's expression-of-sentiment pages.

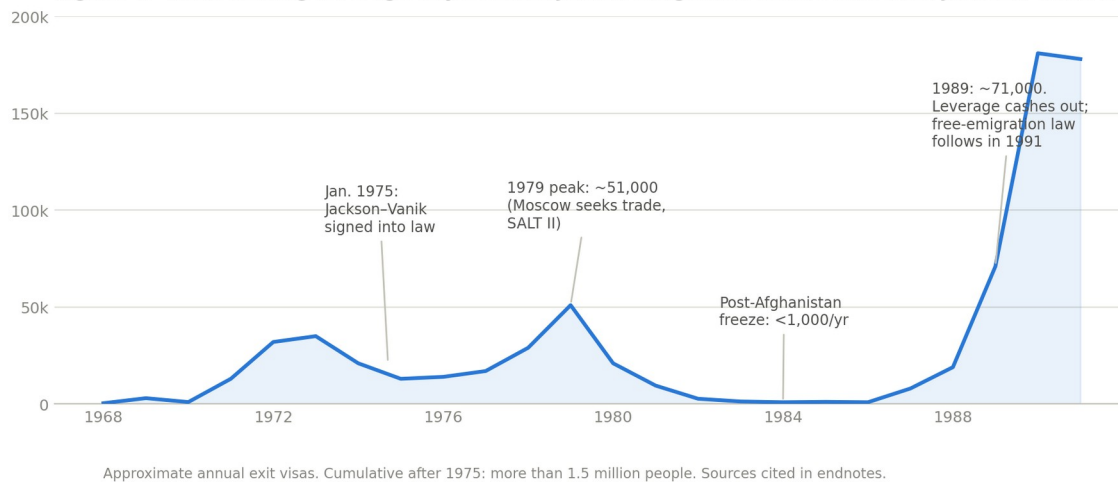
Figure 5. Binding statutes produce measurable outcomes: four precedents



Case 1. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment (1974): trade conditioned on human beings

When the Soviet Union imposed its 1972 “diploma tax” on educated Jews seeking to emigrate, the American Soviet Jewry movement did not ask Congress to deplore it. Senator Henry Jackson and Representative Charles Vanik attached a condition to the thing Moscow wanted most: normal trade status. The Trade Act of 1974 provides that products of a non-market economy **“shall not be eligible”** for most-favored-nation treatment, and the country may receive no U.S. credits, while it denies its citizens the right to emigrate or taxes emigration.⁵⁰ President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger fought it bitterly, arguing quiet diplomacy would achieve more. Congress passed it anyway.

The results: Soviet Jewish emigration, running at a few hundred to three thousand persons a year in the late 1960s, reached approximately 51,000 in 1979 as Moscow sought trade normalization and arms-control ratification; after the Gorbachev-era release the annual figure reached roughly 71,000 (1989) and over 180,000 (1990), and in 1991 the USSR enacted a free-emigration law, in significant part to qualify for Jackson-Vanik relief. In total, more than 1.5 million Soviet Jews emigrated after 1975.⁵¹

Figure 4. What binding leverage buys: Soviet Jewish emigration before and after Jackson-Vanik (1968-1991)

Scholars debate how much of any given year's fluctuation the amendment caused; détente's temperature mattered too. What is not debated is the structural fact: for seventeen consecutive years, a binding statute forced every American administration, willing or not, to carry Jewish emigration into every summit with Moscow, because the law left the executive nothing to trade away. Congress had passed sympathetic resolutions on Soviet Jewry before 1974. Emigration stayed in the low thousands. Only when the sentiment acquired a price did the Kremlin negotiate over human beings.

Case 2. The Turkey arms embargo (1975-1978): a diaspora our size, using the power of the purse

The most directly comparable precedent belongs to the Greek-American community. After Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 using American-supplied weapons, a violation of the Foreign Assistance Act's restriction of U.S. arms to defensive use, Greek-American organizations and their congressional allies did not seek a resolution of condemnation. They enforced existing binding law: the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 cut off all military assistance, sales, and credits to Turkey effective February 5, 1975, until the President certified substantial progress on Cyprus.⁵²

President Ford vetoed embargo legislation twice in October 1974; Congress kept passing it. The embargo held for three and a half years against relentless administration lobbying, the most dramatic postwar demonstration that an organized ethnic community of one to three million voters can out-muscle the State Department when it is armed with a statutory violation rather than a grievance.

The precedent also carries a warning. The embargo imposed real costs: Turkey lost access to American arms, and Ankara retaliated by suspending U.S. operations at some two dozen Turkish installations. But it did not force withdrawal from Cyprus, and President Carter won its repeal in 1978 on NATO grounds.⁵³ Binding pressure without a clearly achievable, well-defined demand can eventually be outlasted. The

lesson is not that binding law fails; it is that statutory design matters: pair the “shall not” with realistic benchmarks and a defined off-ramp. Case 6 shows what that looks like done perfectly.

Case 3. The Magnitsky Acts (2012, 2016): one documented case file becomes a global sanctions architecture

Sergei Magnitsky was a Moscow lawyer who exposed a \$230 million tax fraud and died in pre-trial detention in 2009. His client, financier Bill Browder, spent the following decade doing something the Armenian-American community has never systematically done: he converted one documented case into evidence dossiers naming individual perpetrators, and he carried those dossiers office by office through Congress.⁵⁴

The result was binding: the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 directed that the President “**shall submit**” a list of responsible persons and “**shall impose**” asset freezes and visa bans on them. The Global Magnitsky Act of 2016 extended the mechanism worldwide, and its implementing order operationalized it. Critically, the statute contains a congressional trigger: when specified committee leaders submit a name, the President *must* determine within 120 days whether to sanction, and report back. A private citizen's documented dossier can thereby compel an executive-branch answer, something no resolution has ever done.⁵⁵

As of mid-2026, 583 individuals and entities from more than fifty countries have been designated under the Global Magnitsky program (Xinjiang officials, the Saudi operatives who murdered Jamal Khashoggi, Gambian and Burmese generals), with frozen assets, dollar-clearing exclusion, and visa bans. Some thirty-five jurisdictions, including Canada, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Australia, have copied the law.⁵⁶ A resolution honoring Magnitsky's memory would have cost his killers nothing. The Act froze their money. Moscow's furious response, banning Browder and halting American adoptions, was itself the proof that the mechanism bites.

The Armenian application is direct: Representative Titus and Representative Bilirakis's Azerbaijan Sanctions Review Act, dead in committee in the 118th Congress, dormant in the 119th, would require exactly this determination for the officials who blockaded, cleansed, and imprisoned Artsakh. The tool exists. The names are known. What is missing is the documented, sustained, office-by-office campaign that Browder ran for one man, run instead for a nation.

Case 4. The Taiwan Relations Act (1979): binding language as a forty-seven-year operating system

When President Carter abruptly de-recognized Taiwan, Congress rebelled, and rewrote the administration's bare-bones transition bill into a binding security framework that has governed the western Pacific for forty-seven years. The Act's

load-bearing clause is not a sentiment: the United States **“will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability,”** with the judgment of Taiwan's needs assigned by statute to the President and the Congress, excluding Beijing's objections from the legal calculus.⁵⁷

Under that mandate, every administration from Reagan to the present, whatever its China policy, has notified arms sales to Taiwan: roughly \$50 billion in defense articles and services, including F-16 fleets, Patriot batteries, and HIMARS. Beijing formally protests the Act by name precisely because it operates. Congress passes Taiwan-supportive resolutions nearly every session; Beijing ignores those. Within a single policy file, the difference between a resolution and a statute could not be clearer.⁵⁸

Case 5. The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (2021): researcher documentation becomes an import ban

No modern case demonstrates the documentation-to-statute pipeline more clearly. Between 2019 and 2021, a small number of named researchers built an evidentiary record: Adrian Zenz's reports on mass internment and coerced labor; the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's “Uyghurs for Sale,” tracing more than 80,000 transferred Uyghur workers into the supply chains of 82 global brands; and Sheffield Hallam University's supply-chain forensics on cotton and polysilicon. Together they assembled a record that made denial impossible. Their reports were cited in congressional findings, hearings, and enforcement actions.⁵⁹

Against heavy corporate lobbying, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act passed the House 428–1 and the Senate unanimously. Its mechanism is a rebuttable presumption: any goods mined, produced, or manufactured wholly or in part in Xinjiang **“shall be prohibited”** from entry into the United States unless the importer proves, by clear and convincing evidence, that forced labor was not involved. The burden of proof is reversed; the government need prove nothing shipment by shipment.⁶⁰

Enforcement numbers, three years in: 16,755 shipments valued at nearly \$3.7 billion detained; 144 entities blacklisted; Xinjiang's share of global polysilicon capacity down from roughly 41 percent to under 25 percent as global brands re-engineered supply chains around the statute.⁶¹ Congress had already passed Uyghur condemnations in 2019 and 2020. Companies moved billions only when their containers began being held at the Port of Los Angeles. Concern is free; the presumption is expensive.

Case 6. The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (1986): the complete template

The strongest single precedent, because it contains every element the Armenian cause needs executed in sequence, is the American anti-apartheid campaign. Two

decades of published documentation and campus education built the record. A mass movement (daily embassy sit-ins from 1984, thousands of arrests including members of Congress, divestment by over 150 universities and dozens of states and cities) built the pressure. The Congressional Black Caucus supplied the legislative spearhead, introducing sanctions bills annually from 1972. And when President Reagan vetoed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, Congress overrode him, 313–83 in the House and 78–21 in the Senate, with thirty-one Republican senators abandoning their own president. It was the first override of a presidential foreign-policy veto in the twentieth century.⁶²

The statute was pure binding grammar: no new U.S. investment; no new bank loans; import bans on Krugerrands, iron, steel, coal, uranium, textiles, and agricultural products; landing rights terminated. And, in the masterstroke, Section 311 wrote the exit conditions into law: sanctions would lift when, among other conditions, Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners were released, the state of emergency was repealed, and banned political parties were legalized. The United States Code contained, in effect, a statutory checklist of what Pretoria had to do.

Within five years, the checklist was fulfilled: Mandela free (February 1990), apartheid's legal framework repealed (1990–91), sanctions lifted upon certification (July 1991), all-race elections (1994). Mandela himself repeatedly credited international sanctions as decisive. Congress had condemned apartheid in resolutions for a generation with no effect on Pretoria whatsoever. The moment condemnation acquired an import ban and a statutory checklist, apartheid's cost-benefit calculus changed, and the checklist became the negotiating agenda.⁶³

What the six cases prove, and the necessary cautions

Table 7. Six binding statutes and their measurable results

Statute	Binding mechanism	Measured outcome	Community behind it
Jackson–Vanik (1975)	Trade status “shall not” attach while emigration restricted	1.5M+ Soviet Jews emigrated; 1991 Soviet free-emigration law	Soviet Jewry movement; case files on refuseniks
Turkey arms embargo (1975–78)	Statutory cutoff of arms, aid, credits	3.5 years of real costs over two vetoes; lesson in benchmark design	Greek-American community (~1–3M)
Magnitsky Acts (2012/2016)	President “shall impose” sanctions; 120-day congressional trigger	583 designations, 50+ countries; ~35 jurisdictions copied it	One man with documented dossiers
Taiwan Relations Act (1979)	U.S. “will make available” defensive arms, by statute	~\$50B in arms over 47 years; policy Beijing must reckon with	Congressional coalition overriding an administration

Statute	Binding mechanism	Measured outcome	Community behind it
UFLPA (2021)	Imports “shall be prohibited”: rebuttable presumption	16,755 shipments / \$3.7B detained; supply chains re-engineered	Named researchers; Uyghur diaspora
Anti-Apartheid Act (1986)	Import/investment bans + § 311 statutory exit checklist	Checklist fulfilled in 5 years; Mandela freed; apartheid dismantled	Mass movement + 15 years of documentation

Full citations in the endnotes to this Part.

Three cautions belong in the record. First, binding law is not magic: the Turkey embargo shows that open-ended pressure without achievable benchmarks can be outlasted, and UFLPA enforcement intensity has fluctuated with administrations. But the tool exists to fight over, which is itself the point, since no resolution has ever been worth fighting over. Second, causality in history is never single-factor: détente, televised repression, and political windows mattered in every case. Third, executive opposition is the norm, not the exception: Nixon fought Jackson-Vanik, Ford vetoed the embargo twice, Reagan was overridden, corporate lobbies fought the UFLPA to a 428-1 defeat. Binding legislation does not require a friendly White House. It requires a coalition with evidence and staying power.

In every case, the sequence was the same: documentation first, binding ask second, persistence third, constituents fourth. That sequence is a formula. Part VII applies it to the Armenian cause.

Part VII. From Formula to Agenda: What Must Actually Be Demanded

The six precedents share four elements. None of them is mysterious, and none is beyond the Armenian-American community's demonstrated capacity, a community that has, after all, won recognition votes in fifty state capitols and both chambers of Congress. The elements have simply never been assembled in the right order, aimed at the right target.

The four-part formula

- **(a) A documented, citable evidentiary record, physically in policymakers' hands.** Lemkin's Axis Rule; Browder's dossiers; ASPI's and Zenz's reports; the NCSJ's refusenik case files; the 1981 South Africa commission report. Congress converts evidence into mechanisms; it converts sentiment into commemorative resolutions. Staff cannot draft findings from a slogan; they draft from documents on their shelves.
- **(b) A specific binding legislative ask attached to the evidence.** In every successful case the documentation arrived welded to a draft remedy: a convention text, a named-individual sanctions list, an import presumption, a trade condition. The Armenian movement's asks have overwhelmingly been recognition and expressions of concern: asks that, even when granted completely, bind no one.
- **(c) Persistent, repeated delivery over years.** Lemkin lobbied delegates corridor by corridor. Senator Proxmire delivered a floor speech on the Genocide Convention every single day the Senate was in session for nineteen years, 3,211 speeches, until the Senate ratified it and the Proxmire Act made genocide a federal crime.⁶⁴ The Congressional Black Caucus introduced sanctions bills annually for fourteen years before 1986. One markup cycle is not a campaign.
- **(d) Constituent-linked follow-up in the district.** Congressional Management Foundation research on what actually influences undecided members is unambiguous: 94 percent of congressional staff say in-person constituent visits have influence; 91 percent say information about a bill's impact on their district or state would be useful, and only 9 percent receive it frequently. Substantive, individualized, documented material is precisely what offices say they want and almost never get.⁶⁵

What genuinely consequential legislation on the Armenian file looks like

Applying the formula, a serious legislative agenda already exists in draft: most of it has already been introduced, and died, which means the text is written and the sponsors are identified. A binding Armenian accountability statute, modeled on the precedents, would provide that:

- **Security assistance “may not” be provided** to Azerbaijan, and the Section 907 waiver authority is repealed or suspended, until the President certifies that all Armenian prisoners of war, hostages, and political prisoners have been released (the S. 3000 / H.R. 7288 mechanism, with certification conditions modeled on CAAA § 311);
- **The President “shall determine,”** within 120 days of a congressional trigger letter, whether named Azerbaijani officials (the judges, prosecutors, prison officials, and commanders documented in the Baku trials, the blockade, and the 2023 offensive) meet Global Magnitsky criteria, and “shall impose” sanctions on those who do (the H.R. 8141 / H.R. 5369 mechanism);
- **Arms transfers are prohibited** to any state blockading or restricting U.S. humanitarian assistance; that is, Section 620I is enforced as written, with its waiver narrowed;
- **Periodic public reporting is required** on every Armenian known to be detained, on the destruction of Armenian religious and cultural heritage, and on the right of return of the displaced population of Artsakh, with each report transmitted to the sanctions determination process;
- **Statutory exit conditions are written into the law**, release of prisoners, access for the ICRC, cessation of “Western Azerbaijan” irredentist claims, safeguards for heritage sites, so that Baku, like Pretoria in 1986, knows exactly what conduct lifts the pressure.

None of this is exotic. Every clause exists today in enacted precedent or in already-introduced Armenian-file bills. What has been missing is not text. It is the evidentiary and political infrastructure that moves such text from introduction to markup to floor: the infrastructure the six precedents built and the Armenian cause has not.

Documents do not pass laws; they make passage possible

A caution belongs here, because this paper has criticized overselling and must not oversell. In none of the six precedents did documents alone produce a statute. Documents built the *record*; a political window (Magnitsky's death, televised Soweto, the Xinjiang leaks) supplied the moment; and organized constituencies converted moment plus record into law. The window for the Armenian cause will open: a change of administration, a collapse of the Aliyev regime's carefully cultivated image, an energy realignment, a hostage crisis that breaks through the news cycle. The question is whether, when it opens, four hundred and fifty congressional offices already hold the documented case and the drafted remedy, or whether the community will once again have nothing on the shelf but expired resolutions and a stack of press releases announcing victories that never occurred.

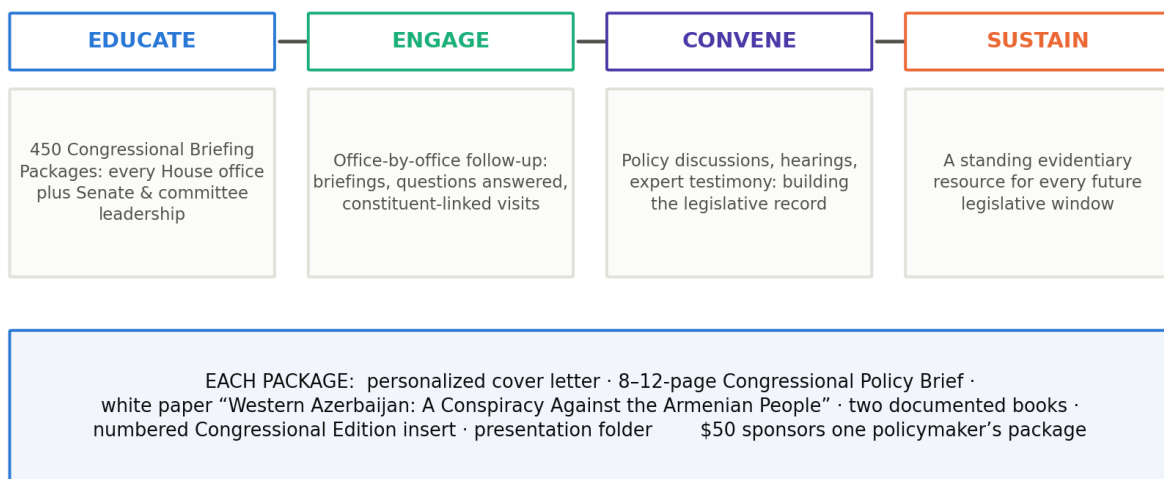
Preparing for that window is a defined, fundable, measurable project. It is described in Part VIII.

Part VIII. The 1,000 Book Initiative: Building the Record That Produces Law

One reason Congress repeatedly produces symbolic language instead of enforceable remedies is that many lawmakers and their staffs do not possess a complete understanding of the Armenian case. They may know that the Armenian Genocide occurred. They may know that Azerbaijan attacked Artsakh. They may have heard that Armenian prisoners remain in Baku. But recognition of individual facts does not provide the historical, legal, and geopolitical framework needed to draft serious policy: to understand how the unresolved consequences of genocide, territorial dispossession, energy interests, foreign military assistance, the destruction of Artsakh, the detention of its leaders, and Azerbaijan's "Western Azerbaijan" doctrine are connected.

That education cannot be accomplished through a slogan, a social-media graphic, or a one-page request for another non-binding resolution. Members of Congress need evidence. They need primary sources. They need legal analysis. They need policy proposals. They need materials their staffs can examine, preserve, cite, and use when legislation is being drafted. Part VI showed that every community that obtained binding law delivered exactly that. The 1,000 Book Initiative is Global Peace International's instrument for delivering it on behalf of the Armenian cause.⁶⁶

Figure 9. The 1,000 Book Initiative: converting documentation into a legislative record



The program

The 1,000 Book Initiative is a national educational campaign created to place documented research directly into the hands of American policymakers. Its first

phase seeks to deliver a professionally prepared **Congressional Briefing Package** to 450 targeted offices, every member of the House of Representatives, with Senate and committee leadership, followed by outreach to executive-branch officials, universities, think tanks, libraries, and research institutions. Each congressional package contains:

- a personalized cover letter addressed to the member;
- an 8-to-12-page Congressional Policy Brief;
- the white paper *Western Azerbaijan: A Conspiracy Against the Armenian People* (Global Peace International White Paper No. 1);
- the book *Western Azerbaijan: The Next Stage After Artsakh*;
- the book *Betrayal Unfinished: Oil, Law, and the Duty to Resolve the Armenian Genocide*;
- a numbered Congressional Edition insert and professional presentation folder.

The initiative does not end when a package is delivered. The program's four phases, **Educate, Engage, Convene, Sustain**, commit Global Peace International to follow up with congressional offices, answer questions, offer briefings, encourage members to convene policy discussions, and maintain a continuing educational resource, so that the material remains alive in each office rather than filed and forgotten. Delivery is designed to be paired with constituent-linked, in-person follow-up in the district, because the Congressional Management Foundation data cited in Part VII show that materials plus constituent visits outperform either alone.

Why placing books in Congress matters

A congressional office receives thousands of emails, form letters, petitions, and social-media messages; most disappear into an electronic queue, and staff say so explicitly in survey research. What offices report lacking is substantive, individualized, citable material: the district-impact information that 91 percent of staff say they want and only 9 percent regularly receive. A professionally prepared, individually numbered briefing package creates something a form email cannot: a physical and intellectual record in the office, available to be checked, cited, and developed into questions, letters, hearings, amendments, reports, and, when the window opens, statutory findings.⁶⁷

This is how every precedent in Part VI began:

- **Raphael Lemkin**, one man with one 712-page documented book (*Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 1944) carried corridor to corridor, produced the binding Genocide Convention within four years.⁶⁸
- **The Soviet Jewry movement** placed name-by-name refusenik case files with members of Congress, and produced Jackson-Vanik. Members “adopted” individual documented prisoners; the case file, not the rally, was what offices acted on.⁶⁹

- **Bill Browder** presented evidence dossiers office by office, later joined by the bestselling book *Red Notice*, and produced the Magnitsky Acts. Congress ran no independent investigation; it legislated on the documented file it was handed.
- **The Uyghur campaign's** think-tank and academic reports, cited verbatim in congressional findings, produced the UFLPA's import ban within two years of “Uyghurs for Sale.”
- **The anti-apartheid movement** published fifteen years of documentation, including a book-length commission report distributed to policymakers, and built the record that made the 1986 veto override possible.⁷⁰
- **Samantha Power's** single Pulitzer-winning documented book, *A Problem from Hell*, reshaped the Washington atrocity-prevention consensus and traceably contributed to the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, a binding statute.⁷¹

The 1,000 Book Initiative consciously replicates this documented-record strategy, with one deliberate difference from the failed pattern of Parts III–V: the materials are welded to the binding legislative agenda of Part VII, not to a request for another resolution. The ask that accompanies every package is not “please express concern.” It is: enact the certification conditions, the sanctions determinations, and the enforcement of existing law that the documented record supports.

One package, one policymaker informed

The campaign is built to be funded by the community it serves, at a scale any family can join, with progress publicly numbered and documented:

Table 8. Sponsorship structure

Tier	Amount	What it does
Sponsor One Package	\$50	Funds one complete Congressional Briefing Package, delivered to one policymaker's office
Congressional Partner	\$100	Delivers one package to a policymaker and provides the sponsor an identical set for personal study
Founding Sponsor	\$250+	Sponsors five to one hundred packages
Custom Contribution	any	Smaller contributions are pooled until another complete package is funded

Each package is numbered; campaign progress is publicly documented at globalpeaceinternational.com/1000books.

Those who cannot sponsor can still move the campaign: share it, introduce it to educators and journalists, organize presentations, and connect Global Peace International with policymakers and institutions. This is not a general request to “raise awareness.” It is a defined project with a measurable objective: **one sponsorship, one complete package, one more American policymaker**

informed, and behind it, a permanent evidentiary record waiting in four hundred and fifty offices for the day the window opens.

Part IX. The Custodian's Record: The Leadership Behind This Work

A community asked to fund a campaign is entitled to ask two questions: who leads it, and what have they actually done? This paper has held Congress to a standard of documented acts rather than announcements. Its author should be held to the same standard. This Part answers with the record.

The inheritance: Shahan Natalie and the lesson of Operation Nemesis

In 1919, an Ottoman court-martial convicted the leaders of the Young Turk regime for the organized annihilation of the Armenian people and sentenced the principal architects to death in absentia. Not one sentence was carried out. The convicted men had fled abroad; those in custody were released in prisoner exchanges from Malta. By 1920, the men who had directed the Genocide were regrouping, and the successor movements they inspired, the Kemalist forces from Turkey and Azerbaijani forces in the east, were attacking what remained of Armenia. Baku's massacres of 1918 had gone entirely unpunished. Every court had failed. Every great power had moved on. The world had concluded that nothing could be done.⁷²

One man refused that conclusion. Shahan Natalie, born Hagop Der-Hagopian in Huseinig in 1884, orphaned by the Hamidian massacres as a boy, became the principal organizer and field director of Operation Nemesis, the covert operation that delivered the justice the courts had abandoned. Between 1920 and 1922, its operatives reached the men responsible: Talaat Pasha, the Genocide's chief architect, in Berlin; Said Halim Pasha in Rome; Behaeddin Shakir and Cemal Azmi in Berlin; and the Azerbaijani leaders responsible for the Baku massacres, Fatali Khan Khoyski in Tiflis and Behbud Khan Javanshir in Constantinople. It was Natalie who directed Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin, with an instruction that has entered Armenian memory: put the Number One nation-murderer down, and surrender to the police.⁷³

Tehlirian stood trial in Berlin, and a German jury, confronted with the evidence of what had been done to the Armenians, acquitted him in roughly an hour. That trial did more than free one man. It put the Genocide itself into a courtroom record before the world, and among those who followed it was the young Raphael Lemkin, who would cite the Tehlirian case as he built the concept, and then the binding international law, of genocide. The reader will recognize the line: from Nemesis to the Berlin acquittal, to Lemkin's documentation, to the Genocide Convention that this paper cited in Part VIII as the founding proof that documented evidence produces binding law. That line runs through Shahan Natalie.⁷⁴

Historians credit Nemesis with more than retribution. It ended the impunity of the Genocide's leadership at the precise moment that leadership was working toward the destruction of the Armenian remnant, and it told a scattered, traumatized nation

that action was possible when every institution said otherwise. Natalie then spent the rest of a long life in the disciplined service of his people: as a writer and editor, including at the Hairenik; as the author of *The Turks and Us*; as a leader in diaspora Armenian letters; and for a decade as District Secretary of the Armenian General Benevolent Union for New England (1943–1953), the quiet organizational work of a community builder.⁷⁵

In 1975, at ninety years of age, Natalie made his last operational decision. He studied his three grandchildren for three months, and at the end of that study he chose one, nine-year-old Ara Khachig Manoogian, to be trained to continue his work. The mentorship ran eight years, until Natalie's death in 1983. It was not sentiment. It was a succession. The family's line, by its record, descends from the Bagratuni royal house, the dynasty that served as custodian of the Armenian lands and leader of the Armenian people through the ninth to eleventh centuries, the era history records as Armenia's golden age: the kingdom of Ani, the city of a thousand and one churches, the cultural and architectural renaissance that still defines Armenian civilization. In that house, custodianship was never a metaphor. It was an assignment, and it was handed down.⁷⁶

The record: justice forced from failing institutions

What follows is a sampling of what that assignment has produced, in Artsakh, in Armenia, in the United States, and internationally. The pattern to watch for is the one this paper has argued Congress must learn: documentation first, persistence second, consequence third.

Artsakh: removing the untouchables

Manoogian moved to Martuni, Artsakh, in 1998 and served from 2000 as the Artsakh representative of the Shahan Natalie Family Foundation, the third non-governmental organization registered in the republic. He functioned for years as an investigative journalist and de facto ombudsman, the citizen officials could not silence, documenting his work publicly on the blog Martuni or Bust from 2001.⁷⁷

The test case came when Arthur Mosiyan, an elected member of the Artsakh National Assembly from the family of Meruzhan Mosiyan, the legendary commander of Martuni's 26th Battalion who fell in the 1993 war, spent an afternoon describing to Manoogian how corrupt, and how untouchable, the regional governor had become. The governor, Vachik Adamyan, was the son and political heir of a powerful Soviet-era boss of Chartar, a man who had secured approval for a Baku rail line to his town in the USSR's final days. Manoogian took the description of untouchability as the test: could documentation move a system whose Prime Minister was himself a product of it? He assembled the evidence and took it directly to Prime Minister Anushavan Danielyan: a file implicating the governor, the regional police chief, and the regional prosecutor in grave corrupt practices. When friends, including relatives of senior officials, warned him that the state security services, still known locally as the KGB, were asking questions about him, he pushed harder. Within a month, all

three officials, each with powerful and influential protectors, were dismissed from their posts.⁷⁸

The same standing produced the conscript case. The sitting mayor of Martuni brought Manoogian a mother whose son, a conscript, stood accused of murdering a fellow soldier. Manoogian conducted a full independent investigation, and what it found was torture: the accused had been brutalized by a well-connected commander at the same time as the soldier who died. Through a civilian judge to whose child he is godfather, an informal meeting was arranged with the military judge, and Manoogian presented his findings. The conscript was exonerated.⁷⁹

The adoption rings: children as commodities

In 2003, posing online as a prospective adoptive parent under the pseudonym Jennifer Smith, Manoogian penetrated the informal machinery of international adoption from Armenia, documenting unofficial payments of nine to thirteen thousand dollars per child, money that, as RFE/RL reported his findings, would “trickle upwards to relevant government officials.” The exposure of adoptions run as a market in children pushed the issue into public view and contributed to the tightening of Armenia's adoption procedures and child-protection rules; the systemic corruption he described was confirmed on a large scale when Armenian authorities uncovered fraudulent international adoption rings in 2019.⁸⁰

Desert Nights: the trafficking investigation that moved three governments

From 2004 to 2006, Manoogian worked undercover in the brothels of Dubai alongside Hetq editor Edik Baghdasaryan in the investigation published as *Desert Nights*. The two documented roughly two thousand Armenian women trafficked into the sex trade of the Emirates and neighboring states, named the ringleaders, and, most dangerously, named the officials: their April 2005 findings, reported by RFE/RL, implicated senior Armenian law-enforcement figures, including Aristakes Yeremian, a senior investigator of the Prosecutor-General's office, in profiting from the rings.⁸¹

Consequences followed on three fronts. In Armenia and the Emirates, traffickers named in the investigation were arrested, extradited, and convicted, among them the Dubai madam Susana Sukiasyan, arrested with ten women in July 2005, and the trafficker Irina Yenokyan, tried from 2007; the investigation and the documentary that followed also served as a warning broadcast to the young women the rings recruit. The Emirates' only official response was to ban Hetq's website in the country, a censorship that measured the report's impact. In Washington, the 2005 Trafficking in Persons cycle put the UAE on Tier 3, the lowest ranking; the State Department's finding pointed toward sanctions, and the White House's determination that September spared the Emirates from them, moving them instead onto the Tier 2 Watch List. Even that softened outcome forced action: the UAE enacted its first federal anti-trafficking law in November 2006 and repatriated over a

thousand trafficked child camel jockeys under international supervision. And years later, United States Embassy cables published by WikiLeaks confirmed what Desert Nights had alleged and officials had denied since 2005: that Armenian prosecutors were threatening trafficking victims into silence, and that Yeremian, documented in the cables as having punched a trafficking victim, was merely transferred and demoted, never prosecuted.⁸²

The investigation reached into the international institutions as well. As recorded in the author's published biography, the findings implicated Rafayel Gyulnazaryan, the head of the anti-human-trafficking department at the United Nations in Yerevan, a former Armenian prosecution official, as connected to the ring he was charged with fighting; with the help of the United States State Department, he was dismissed from his post. Contemporary international assessments, including within the OSCE anti-trafficking community, ranked Desert Nights among the finest investigative work on trafficking of its period.⁸³

The army abuse case: forcing the truth from eight thousand miles away

In September 2010, a mobile-phone video surfaced showing an officer brutally abusing two conscripts of the Artsakh army. The Defense Minister's response was categorical denial: "It's a disinformation about our army, and I do not believe what was captured on that video has really taken place." The authorities pressured YouTube into removing the video. Manoogian, by then working from California, eight thousand miles away, had downloaded it. He re-uploaded it on his own channel, refused every demand to take it down, and pressed the identification of the unit and the abuser into public view. Threats against his life followed; he answered, "Wake up, people! Tomorrow it might be too late." Within days of the ministry's denial the perpetrator, Major Sasun Galstian, deputy commander of the unit, was identified, arrested, and charged. On December 11, 2010, a court sentenced him to three years in prison.⁸⁴

The Berberian murder: investigating the investigators

When Nazareth Berberian, an Armenian-American businessman and philanthropist, was murdered in Yerevan in April 2009, strangled and injected with ketamine, his car staged at the airport to fake a departure, Manoogian investigated not only the crime but the police investigation of it. Three men ultimately received life sentences for the killing. Manoogian's own inquiry, however, found the official investigation riddled with corrupt practices and forensic deficiencies, and his findings pointed to a cover-up protecting the interests behind a real-estate development on Northern Avenue in central Yerevan, implicating, in his assessment, Levon Sargsyan, brother of then-President Serzh Sargsyan. He compiled a 150-page report and delivered it to the FBI's field office in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Bureau's answer closed the file and proved this paper's thesis in miniature: Armenia was too corrupt, they were saddened by the loss of an American, and they had no power to do anything. Where institutions had jurisdiction, they lacked will; where he had will, he lacked

jurisdiction. What remained was the documented record, which is how every accountability that has ever arrived, arrived.⁸⁵

Burbank: reforming an American police department

The record is not confined to the Caucasus. In 2010, the City of Burbank, California, home to one of the largest Armenian communities in America, brought in Scott LaChasse, a thirty-two-year LAPD veteran, as interim police chief of a department drowning in discrimination lawsuits, federal investigation, and what LaChasse himself described as a culture of mutual disrespect that risked a federal consent decree. Manoogian, a Burbank resident, worked with the interim chief's reform effort and turned his investigative attention to the city government actions that threatened it, a focus that came to rest on City Manager Mike Flad, who had moved to replace the reforming chief through a recruitment process that no precedent required. Manoogian's reporting laid the contradiction bare in public. In October 2012, a week before the chief-recruitment application deadline, and shortly after committing to remain, Flad resigned to take the city manager's post in South Gate. Manoogian's final report circulated inside the city; the recruitment died; LaChasse was made permanent chief and served until his retirement in 2021, completing the transformation: use-of-force policies updated for the first time since 1989, ten officers fired and seventeen hired, women recruited onto a force that had excluded them, and a department once described as “a white male batch camp” actively recruiting from every community of a city whose population is fifteen percent Armenian.⁸⁶

And the record continues

The sampling above omits more than it includes: the 2012 campaign for justice after the beating death of Dr. Vahe Avetian by a parliamentarian's bodyguards; the exposure that took the Glendale broadcast of the ultranationalist “Armenian Aryan Fist” off the air; the twenty-four-day hunger strike in 2013, carried from Burbank to the gates of the White House, against American legitimization of a stolen Armenian election; the Policy Forum Armenia white papers dissecting the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund; the books, the archive, and the thousands of individual citizens in Artsakh and Armenia who brought their cases to a man they trusted when they could not trust their own officials.⁸⁷

Table 9. The record at a glance

Years	Case	Outcome
1920-22	Operation Nemesis (Shahan Natalie, principal organizer)	The Genocide's unpunished architects brought to justice; the Berlin acquittal that helped inspire Lemkin's Genocide Convention; the remnant of the nation defended
~2003	Artsakh regional corruption file	Governor, police chief, and prosecutor, all

Years	Case	Outcome
	presented to PM Danielyan	considered untouchable, dismissed within a month
2003	Undercover adoption investigation (“Jennifer Smith”)	Illegal adoption market exposed; child-protection and adoption procedures tightened
2004–06	Desert Nights trafficking investigation (with Hetq)	Traffickers arrested and convicted; implicated UN anti-trafficking official removed; UAE forced into its first anti-trafficking law; findings later confirmed by U.S. embassy cables
2010	Artsakh army abuse video	Official denial reversed within days; Maj. Sasun Galstian arrested, sentenced to three years
2009–11	Berberian murder inquiry	Corrupt investigative practices documented; 150-page report to the FBI; three life sentences in the underlying murder
2010–12	Burbank Police Department reform fight	City manager resigned; reforming chief made permanent (served to 2021); department modernized and diversified

Sources cited in the endnotes to this Part. Items resting on the author's investigative files are identified as such in the notes.

What this record means for this initiative

The pattern across five decades and two continents is consistent. When institutions denied, he documented. When documentation was ignored, he persisted, under KGB attention in Artsakh, death threats over the army video, and the pressure of city hall in Burbank. And consequences followed: officials dismissed, traffickers imprisoned, an abusive officer jailed, a police department rebuilt, children protected by better law. None of it was accomplished with a title, a budget line, or an office of state. It was accomplished the way his grandfather taught him in the eight years of a deliberate succession: with evidence, patience, and the refusal to accept that nothing can be done.

That is precisely the method this paper proposes to bring to Congress. The 1,000 Book Initiative does not ask the community to fund another organization's press releases. It asks the community to put the documented Armenian case into four hundred and fifty congressional offices under the leadership of a custodian who has spent fifty years proving that documentation, delivered and defended, forces institutions to act. The assignment Shahan Natalie handed a nine-year-old boy in 1975 was to continue the work of justice for the Armenian people by whatever honorable

means the era allows. In this era, the means is the record, and the record is ready to be delivered.

Conclusion: Do Not Stop at the Headline

The Armenian prisoners remain in Baku. Azerbaijan has not been compelled to release them. No sanction was triggered by the 44-7 vote. No assistance was suspended. No enforceable condition was enacted. The committee vote may prove useful, but it is not the victory the headlines announced, and the difference between those two things, multiplied across fifty-one years, is the subject this community can no longer afford to avoid.

This paper has not argued that the vote was worthless, that every legislator is cynical, or that advocacy organizations have achieved nothing. The forty-four members who voted in favor should be encouraged to support stronger measures; Representative Sherman deserves recognition for filing the enforcement language, and the record should note that it was the committee, not he, that insisted on stripping it. But advocacy loses credibility when a non-binding committee statement, attached to a bill that failed the same afternoon, is presented in language that causes the public to believe Congress has taken enforceable action. The appropriate message is not that nothing happened. The appropriate message is that **the first step happened, and the steps that could produce consequences have not yet happened, in fifty-one years of first steps.**

The historical record assembled here supports four conclusions. First: the Armenian-American community has now won essentially every symbolic prize American politics offers (fifty states, both chambers, a presidential declaration), and the cumulative policy yield of those prizes is zero. Second: binding measures have been within reach repeatedly, and were killed not by impossibility but by the absence of sustained, documented, district-linked pressure at the moments that mattered, most recently when a unanimous Senate bill died of simple neglect in a House committee. Third: communities of comparable size, armed with documentation and a binding ask, have repeatedly converted American law into freed prisoners, halted goods, sanctioned perpetrators, and dismantled regimes. Fourth: the infrastructure those communities built, the documented record, standing in every office, welded to drafted remedies, is a specific, achievable, fundable project, and it is the project Global Peace International has undertaken.

The Armenian people have received declarations, recognitions, resolutions, commemorations, and expressions of concern for generations. Those statements have value. But remembrance without remedy is not justice, and after Artsakh, no one can any longer pretend that time is neutral while we wait.

It is time to move from statements about what Azerbaijan *should* do to laws governing what the United States *shall* do. Support the 1,000 Book Initiative. Place the documented Armenian case into the hands of those with the authority to act, and do not allow a non-binding headline to become the end of the discussion. Make it the beginning of a demand for real action.

globalpeaceinternational.com/1000books

Notes

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4. Amendment No. 143 to H.R. 9087, offered by Rep. Brad Sherman, June 9, 2026, official text, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20260609/119329/BILLS-119-9087-S000344-Amdt-143.pdf>.
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8. The seven votes against were Reps. Andy Biggs (AZ), Tim Burchett (TN), Randy Fine (FL), Anna Paulina Luna (FL), Scott Perry (PA), Keith Self (TX), and Joe Wilson (SC). Public Radio of Armenia, “House Foreign Affairs Committee Calls for Azerbaijan's Immediate Release of Armenian Hostages,” July 23, 2026, <https://en.armradio.am/2026/07/23/house-foreign-affairs-committee-calls-for-azerbaijans-immediate-release-of-armenian-hostages/>.
9. Committee markup summary, House Foreign Affairs Committee, full-committee markup of June 9–10, 2026 (recorded votes of July 22, 2026): Sherman Amendment No. 143, as modified, adopted 44–7; H.R. 9087, as amended, not reported favorably, 23–28. On the Democratic objections to the underlying bill, see Rep. Sara Jacobs, “Rep. Sara Jacobs Pushes to Strengthen Capacity and Effectiveness at State Department,” press release, July 22, 2026,

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About the Author

Ara Khachig Manoogian is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Global Peace International. Born in 1965 in Pasadena, California, he is the grandson of Shahan Natalie, the principal organizer of Operation Nemesis, the covert operation that brought the architects of the Armenian Genocide to justice when the world's courts would not.

Mr. Manoogian has devoted more than thirty years to research and fieldwork on Armenia and the South Caucasus, with firsthand experience in Artsakh beginning in 1993. Living and working in Artsakh from 1998, he served as an investigative journalist and de facto ombudsman, exposing corruption and human trafficking, and is the custodian of a private historical archive documenting the Armenian cause across more than a century. He is the co-author of *Desert Nights* (2006) and *Betrayal: The Promise Never Kept* (2019), the founder of thetruthmustbetold.com, and the author of Global Peace International's ongoing publication program, including *Western Azerbaijan: The Next Stage After Artsakh* and *Betrayal Unfinished: Oil, Law, and the Duty to Resolve the Armenian Genocide*.

His work proceeds from a single stated principle: recognition of a wrong is only the beginning, and remembrance without remedy is not justice.

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Global Peace International is an independent organization dedicated to fostering peace, dialogue, and cooperation among people of all nations, cultures, and beliefs. It confronts the roots of conflict through rigorous research, education, and dialogue, operating through three pillars, **Educate, Connect, Empower**, spanning published books, white papers, educational resources, community dialogue, and advocacy tools.

This is the second white paper in the organization's congressional education series, following *Western Azerbaijan: A Conspiracy Against the Armenian People*. Both are included in the Congressional Briefing Package of the 1,000 Book Initiative.

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