

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE
2 LONG-STANDING TRADITIONS OF INTERFAITH TOLERANCE, INCLUSION AND HAR-
3 MONY IN AZERBAIJAN, AND APPLAUDING THE EFFORTS BY AZERBAIJAN TO FOSTER
4 THESE TRADITIONS.
5

6 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

7 WHEREAS, the Republic of Azerbaijan is a staunch ally and partner of the
8 United States in the strategically important South Caucasus region border-
9 ing Iran, Russia, Turkey and Central Asia; and

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

14 WHEREAS, Azerbaijan was home to one of the earliest Christian nations in
15 the world, and the Christian community has helped to shape Azerbaijan's his-
16 tory throughout the ages, and today this 450,000 people strong community re-
17 mains an important and vibrant part of Azerbaijani culture and society; and

18 WHEREAS, living alongside of the Christian and Muslim communities is a
19 thriving Jewish community of about 30,000 that also has a long heritage in
20 Azerbaijan dating back more than two thousand years, and when, over the cen-
21 turies, Jews in the surrounding regions found themselves persecuted, they
22 found Azerbaijan as a haven, and during World War II many European Jews es-
23 caping Nazi persecutions found shelter in Azerbaijan; and

24 WHEREAS, the Jewish community is an integral part of Azerbaijan's eco-
25 nomic, cultural and political life, and today synagogues and Jewish schools
26 flourish in the country; and

27 WHEREAS, it is no coincidence that Azerbaijan is one of the very few sec-
28 ular countries in the wider Middle East and Eurasia with a predominately Mus-
29 lim population that maintains close, friendly ties with the State of Israel;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, the three major religions have prospered because of the age-
32 old respect and tolerance of the Azerbaijani people, but also because of an
33 important role the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan has played in
34 constantly fostering the environment of interfaith tolerance, mutual accep-
35 tance and respect in the country; and

36 WHEREAS, since the very beginning of independence, Azerbaijan has cre-
37 ated an environment that nurtures and promotes the ancient tradition of re-
38 ligious tolerance, and rejects radicalism, extremism and hatred; Azerbaijan
39 sees diversity as one of the country's great strengths and virtues and has
40 worked to ensure that this diversity continues to blossom; and

41 WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has recently built and rebuilt churches and syna-
42 gogues and created new cultural centers for different faiths; the country
43 has financially supported all three religions without discrimination, all

1 the while making sure that Christians and Jews are represented in all three
2 branches of the government in Azerbaijan; and

3 WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has repeatedly, over the course of the last decade,
4 brought together religious leaders from the region and around the world to
5 promote interfaith dialogue--an example that is sorely needed--and in April
6 2016 Azerbaijan will host the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Fo-
7 rum; and

8 WHEREAS, 2016 has been proclaimed a Year of Multiculturalism by Azer-
9 baijan; and

10 WHEREAS, the United States of America also has an interest in such a suc-
11 cess story, since Azerbaijan, secular, tolerant, and inclusive, is crucial
12 to a region ridden with hatred and strife; and

13 WHEREAS, given the rising levels of radicalism, terrorism, hate, xeno-
14 phobia and intolerance in the world, it is important for the United States of
15 America to support its tolerant and secular allies and consider the Azerbair-
16 jani model of interfaith acceptance and community engagement as a function-
17 ing example, and to encourage this policy around the globe.

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
19 sion of the Sixty-third Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and
20 the Senate concurring therein, that we do hereby recognize and commend the
21 long-standing traditions of interfaith tolerance, inclusion and harmony in
22 Azerbaijan, and we applaud the efforts by Azerbaijan to foster these tradi-
23 tions, which can be a model and functioning example in these troubled times.