

2018
annual report



MISSION STATEMENT

The Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region is the largest and most influential Armenian-American grassroots advocacy organization in the Western United States. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout the region and affiliated organizations around the country, the ANCA-WR serves all aspects of the Armenian Cause by organizing and developing local Armenian communities; promoting the political, legal, social, cultural, educational and economic interests and rights of the Armenian American community at the local, state, regional, and national levels; seeking justice for the Armenian Genocide; supporting economic development and democracy in the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh; ensuring the right to self-determination and independence for the people of Artsakh and Javakhk; ensuring the return of Nakhichevan to its rightful owners; and advocating for all aspects of the Armenian Cause through grassroots mobilization, political relationships, media presence, and education.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



With each year that passes, the Armenian Nation continues to move forward both in Armenia and throughout the Diaspora. The complexities which define our Nation, with two thirds of Armenians living outside the Homeland, uniquely enable us to have different priorities at different times. And while these priorities may not always be in sync, there is never a doubt that we all serve a common national agenda.

The year 2018 was eventful, as we reached the threshold of a new chapter in our collective history. With the Velvet Revolution and peaceful assertion of its will, the Armenian People ushered in an era of hope and optimism for the future, encouraging every Armenian to have a stake in it, regardless of citizenship or domicile.

The ANCA for its part, has always prioritized using its local, regional and national resources to serve Armenian interests everywhere, and to benefit Armenia and Artsakh by activating the political capital it has cultivated for decades to advocate for U.S. foreign aid and to secure support for key issues, including seeking justice for the Armenian Genocide, facilitating Genocide education, promoting civic engagement, developing our local communities at the grassroots level, and engaging our youth in numerous internship programs.

Over the past 25 years, the ANCA has successfully advocated for over \$2.5 billion in U.S. aid to Armenia and over \$45 million in U.S. aid to Artsakh, all of which has contributed greatly to the advancement of our Homeland. In the past year alone, the ANCA has developed new initiatives for the same purpose, continuing to work toward passage of the U.S.-Armenia Double Tax Treaty, the U.S.-Armenia Social Security Agreement, the Haiti and Armenia Reforestation Act of 2018, direct flights between Los Angeles and Yerevan, renewal of the Millennium Challenge Account grant to promote STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) education in rural areas, the U.S.-Artsakh Travel and Communication Resolution, completion of funding for de-mining in Artsakh, new funding to expand the prestigious Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Artsakh, raising the profile of Artsakh by hosting its President Bako Sahakyan in an historic visit to Capitol Hill, and taking steps to hold both Turkey and Azerbaijan accountable for past and present human rights violations and to counter their well-funded public relations campaigns against us. The ANCA-WR Board, staff and activists routinely travel all over the Western Region and to Washington DC to meet with elected officials at every level to promote our organizational and community priorities. This year, we led a successful Legislative Delegation and Trade Study Group to Armenia with the goal of facilitating collaborative efforts with California in both the public and private sectors. Challenges were identified, and solutions were discussed in an effort to bring Armenia into the global economy and to help it become the Silicon Valley of the region.

Here at home in the Western Region, we continued our regional and local efforts to advance the Armenian Cause. Our Divest Turkey initiative developed by the Armenian Youth Federation and the Armenian Students' Associations on college campuses

statewide and introduced in the California State Legislature finally passed both houses unanimously. Our work with Senator Anthony Portantino resulted in a grant of \$500,000 to the Genocide Education Project with which we collaborate to facilitate teacher training and appropriate textbook and supplementary materials to properly teach California students about the Armenian Genocide and Near East Relief. Our ANCA-Professional Network has been revamped to bring young Armenian professionals together to network and cultivate relationships with other Armenian and non-Armenian professional organizations to advance issues of common interest. Our ANCA-WR Education Committee continues to encourage teachers in public schools to find creative ways to teach about the Armenian Genocide. Our local chapters in California and throughout the Western Region engage with their communities to encourage civic activism and participation. And our internship programs develop leadership and advocacy skills for our youth and future activists.

All in all, 2018 was yet another momentous year for the entire Armenian Nation, and as the largest and most effective organization advocating for the Armenian Cause in the United States, the ANCA through its volunteers, activists and staff once again renews its commitment and dedication to our People, our communities, and our Homeland. We thank you for your support without which our achievements would not be possible. To continue in our efforts, we need you, and we ask you to contribute in any way you can, whether it is through your generous donations or your benevolent devotion of time and expertise. Our Nation needs each of us now more than ever, and for this reason, we hope to see you in the trenches!

In Common Cause and Solidarity,

Nora Hovsepian, Esq.

Chair



NEW ARMENIA

In the spring of 2018, hundreds of thousands of Armenians changed their government through peaceful and democratic means to create a “New Armenia.” The leader of this movement, former newspaper editor and political prisoner Nikol Pashinyan, led decentralized street closures across Armenia to protest an attempt by the country’s president to extend his decade-long rule. Two weeks after the latter resigned, Pashinyan was elected Prime Minister by fellow Parliamentarians. Through its Velvet Revolution, post-Soviet Armenia has become an inspiration for grassroots-led democracy.

Armenia’s peaceful, constitutional, domestically-driven political transition—through the election of Nikol Pashinyan as Armenia’s Prime Minister—has been welcomed around the world from the Washington, D.C. foreign policy community to the European Union. The ANCA-WR stood in solidarity with our compatriots in Armenia and welcomed the election of Prime Minister Pashinyan as the undisputed manifestation of the will of the People.

The New Armenia that resulted through the Velvet Revolution now has the potential to:

- Raise Armenia’s profile among U.S. policymakers as an independent, reliable, and democratic partner in advancing shared regional and international priorities;
- Sharpen the coher ANCA-backed U.S. kick-starters for growth in bilateral trade and investment;
- Raise international investor confidence in Armenia as a stable, reliable, safe, law-based, and profitable place to do business, within the Armenian market and as a platform to Eurasia and the Greater Middle East;
- Open the door to Artsakh’s long-overdue return to constructive participation in the ongoing Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group talks to resolve Artsakh-Azerbaijan status and security issues;
- Create new opportunities for the expansion of U.S.-Armenia military dialogue and cooperation, including financial, training, and logistical support for Armenia’s international peace-keeping capabilities.

2018 CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION AND TRADE STUDY TRIP



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In September, the ANC-WR led a delegation of prominent California elected officials and business representatives on a legislative trip and trade study project to meet with influential figures across Armenia's political spectrum and with various IT centers. Through this trip, the delegation met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Minister of Economic Development Artsvik Minasyan, Minister of Agriculture Arthur Khachatryan, First Deputy Minister of Transport, Communication, and Information Technologies Hakob Arshakyan, and representatives from Parliamentary factions including Bright Armenia/Yelk Coalition, Civil Contract/Yelk Coalition, the Republican Party, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsoutioun. The delegation also visited some of the main IT centers in Armenia including the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and the Gyumri Technology Center where meetings were also held with the Mayor of Glendale's sister city Samvel Balasamyan of Gyumri and Shirak Province Governor Karen Sarukhanyan.

Delegation participants included:

Honorable Anthony Portantino, California State Senate

Honorable Henry Stern, California State Senate

Honorable Autumn Burke, California State Assembly

Honorable Evan Low, California State Assembly

Honorable Zareh Sinanyan, Glendale City Mayor

Honorable Ardashes "Ardy" Kassakhian, Glendale City Clerk

Mr. Vikrum Aiyer, Vice President of Global Public Policy & Strategic Communications, Postmates

Ms. Andrea Deveau, Senior Vice President, Strategies 360

Ms. Merissa Khachigian, Senior Director, State Government Affairs, Oracle

Ms. Nora Hovsepian, Chair, Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region

Mr. Dickran Khodanian, Communications Coordinator, Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region

The delegation trip successfully laid the foundation for constructive collaboration in various educational, economic, agricultural, trade, and IT sectors between Armenia and the 5th largest economy in the world, California.

MEETING WITH OFFICIALS



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The Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region staff and local activists alike, have held dozens of successful meetings with elected officials from the local, state, and federal levels across the various Western Region states. As such, the organization has remained committed to its long-standing mission to educate and familiarize public officials with concerns and priorities of the Armenian-American community. In addition, ANCA-WR has routinely met with high-level staffers of various representatives and officials, school administrators, and teachers, to establish dialogue and garner their support in the advancement of the Armenian-American Cause. During the August Congressional recess, ANCA-WR leaders, senior staff, and activists ardently met with numerous Congressional representatives in California, Nevada, Colorado, Oregon, Arizona, Texas, and Utah to discuss issues of priority to their Armenian constituents. Topics of discussion included support for HR.6503 - Haiti and Armenia Reforestation Act of 2018, reaffirming the importance of support for the demining of Artsakh, advocating for funding for the prestigious Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Artsakh, recognizing Artsakh's independence, and enhancing U.S.-Armenia trade relations through the elimination of double taxation. In addition, ANCA-WR activists successfully advocated for documentaries that educate the public about the importance of the Armenian Genocide and its path to justice.

Among the bipartisan Senate and House offices visited by ANCA-WR advocates were: Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-3rd District), Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA-27th District), Congressman Mike Coffman (R-CO-6th District), Congressman Lou Correa (D-CA-46th District), Congressman John Curtis (R-UT-3rd District), Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-19th District), Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (D-CA-32nd District), Congressman Ed Royce (R-CA-39th District), Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA-30th District), Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA-28th District), Congressman Chris Stewart (R-UT-2nd District), Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV-1st District), and Congresswoman Mimi Walters's office - Donovan Higbee - Senior District Representative.

In a historically significant move, the ANCA also hosted Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan in Washington D.C. where he addressed and met with members of Congress at a reception held for him at Capitol Hill.





DIVESTMENT

Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian's measure (AB 1597) – a movement long championed by the Armenian National Committee of America Western Region (ANCA-WR) and Armenian Youth Federation Western USA (AYF-WUSA), passed in both the California State Assembly with a vote of 69-0 and in the California State Senate with a 36-0 vote and as of this writing is awaiting signature from Governor Brown.

In May, members of the Armenian Youth Federation presented the Divest Turkey initiative to the University of California Board of Regents during the session of the Investments Subcommittee. The Divest Turkey initiative was added to the agenda of this session following a February hearing of the Senate Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange chaired by Senator Anthony Portantino where testimony was also provided by Jagdeep Bachher, Chief Investment Officer, Vice President of Investments at the University of California.

In addition, during April's March for Justice, Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom stated unequivocally, "It is wrong of us as a state and as a system like the UC to invest in Turkish bonds. It's time for divestment at the UC and CalPERS! And let me commit to you to work hard to advance that principle as well as we advance the principle of reconciliation." He also then submitted a letter to the University of California Board of Regents ahead of their meeting asking for a review of the investments in the Turkish government and to move towards divestment of UC funds.

California has a long history of divesting from countries that violate human rights, South Africa (apartheid policy), Sudan (Darfur genocide), and Iran (international terrorism, human rights violations.) A divestment from Turkish bonds over Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide, the continued funding of a campaign of genocide denial, and the recent erosion of democratic principles would send a clear message that California, the 5th largest economy in the world, demands justice and recognition for 1.5 million Armenians killed in the Genocide.

LOCAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

The ANCA-WR has ushered in a new organized form of effective grassroots activism within the community. With broad-based support of an unparalleled network of cultural, educational, athletic, charitable, and youth organizations, the ANCA-WR efforts expanded tenfold as our local chapters work hard to cultivate relationships with local public officials and entities, continue our community development programs, and help promote grassroots activism on a local level to be utilized at the state, regional and national levels to advance the Armenian Cause.

ANCA Glendale

In April, the ANCA Glendale Chapter sponsored Camp Darfur Interactive Exhibits in three GUSD High Schools and Glendale Community College. Camp Darfur is an interactive genocide awareness and educational exhibit hosted by the non-profit organization iACT. The purpose of the exhibit is to bring attention to the ongoing genocide in Darfur, Sudan, by placing it in an historical context with the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the Colombian Genocide, the Rwandan Genocide, and Bosnian Genocide. This traveling refugee camp raises awareness and examines Sudan's Darfur region and its humanitarian crisis and gives students the opportunity to discover their ability and power to make a difference. In addition, the ANCA Glendale Chapter also established the 2018 ANCA Glendale Upstander Scholarship in order to recognize students who have witnessed injustices occur, and as upstanding citizens, taken steps to address those injustices and prevent them from happening in the future.

ANCA Hollywood

During the month of April, the ANCA Hollywood Chapter organized "Revival Through Art," to commemorate 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide through different mediums of art. The gallery showcased different artworks from different time periods and live performances all portraying our growth and revival since the genocide, through art.

ANCA West San Fernando Valley

The ANCA West San Fernando Valley Chapter marked the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Artsakh by organizing a conference featuring historian Garo Moumdjian, Ph.D, Editor and Columnist Harut Sassounian, ANCA National Board Member Steven Dadaian, Esq., A.R.F. Western US Central Committee Member Levon Kirakosian, Esq., and A.R.F. Western US Central Committee Member Vache Thomassian, Esq. The goal of the panel was to honor of the 30th anniversary of the Artsakh Liberation Struggle to recap the history and demand of its people to self-determination, as well as to review international resolutions and agreements pertaining to its legal status.

LOCAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

ANCA North San Fernando Valley

In March, the ANCA North San Fernando Valley Chapter met with Los Angeles City Councilmember Mitch Englander(CD 12) to educate him about the dictatorial regime and human rights violations in Azerbaijan, after which he appropriately rescinded a certificate of recognition, which his office sent to the recently-formed California Azerbaijan Friendship Association.

ANCA San Francisco Bay Area Chapter

The ANCA SF Bay Area Chapter organized a special screening of “Architects of Denial” at the SF Public Library, as well as commemorative activities for April 24 Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.

ANCA Pasadena

In May, the ANCA Pasadena Chapter hosted a dinner event at Hovhannes and Hripsime Jivalagian Youth Center in honor of City of Pasadena’s Vanadzor Sister City Delegation, which traveled to Vanadzor, Armenia, late August of last year. The delegation was led by the City of Pasadena’s Mayor, Terry Tornek, and Pasadena’s Vanadzor Sister City Committee. The purpose of the trip was to extend goodwill and to advance cross-cultural ties between the City of Pasadena and the City of Vanadzor.

ANCA Silicon Valley

In September, a standing room only crowd of young Armenian American professionals, community leaders, and public officials gathered for the launch of the Armenian National Committee of America’s new Silicon Valley division. The chapter’s inaugural event featured remarks by ANCA National Chairman Raffi Hamparian, briefing those in attendance on the full range of federal pro-Armenian priorities pursued by the organization.



STRENGTHENING OUR PRESENCE OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA



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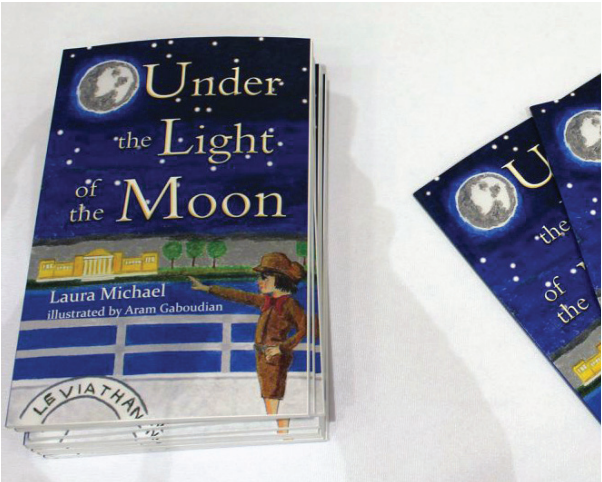
As the strength of its local chapters has grown substantially over the years, the ANCA-WR continues to work diligently to maintain the level of contact it has with policymakers and public officials through grassroots outreach, town hall meetings, advocacy days, and meetings with officials throughout the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Texas, Nebraska and Utah, to name a few. Given the unequivocally impactful outcomes which have been attained through the efforts of the various local chapters, the ANCA-WR will continue to heavily invest in building and engaging with Armenian communities well beyond its headquarters in Los Angeles, CA.

In the last year, working with our partner organization, Armenians of Colorado, one of our landmark accomplishments included the designation of the Sardarapat Armenian Memorial Highway in Colorado. In April 2018, during the annual legislative commemorations of the Armenian Genocide, the Colorado House of Representatives, led by Rep. Cole Wist and Rep. Jeff Bridges, and the State Senate, led by Sen. Dominick Moreno and Sen. Jack Tate, unanimously passed House Joint Resolution 18-1019 that designates the four-mile portion of Arapahoe Road between Interstate 25 and Parker Road – which connects Centennial and Aurora, two cities with active Armenian American communities – as Sardarapat Armenian Memorial Highway “in honor of Armenian Genocide survivors’ valiant contributions in creating the independent Republic of Armenia one hundred years ago.” The Memorial Highway signs were unveiled in a September 2018 ceremony attended by elected officials, ANCA and other community leaders.

In March, ANCA-Arizona, joined by ANCA-WR’s Community Development Coordinator Simon Maghakyan and the Republic of Artsakh’s Permanent Representative Robert Avetisyan, held productive meetings at the Arizona State Capitol, including with Speaker J.D. Mesnard and other elected officials, to discuss peace in Artsakh and other issues of concern to the Armenian American community.

Throughout the month of August, ANCA grassroots across the Western USA held district meetings with members of Congress, advocating for enhanced US-Armenian relations, including support for reforestation in Armenia, and educating their elected officials about Armenia’s people-powered Velvet Revolution.

BRINGING EDUCATION TO THE FRONTLINE



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The ANCA-WR's Education Committee fosters and maintains relations with officials, administrators, and representatives from community based organizations that deal with education and youth matters. To ensure that the events leading up to, during and in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide find their rightful place in school textbooks and are properly taught for generations to come, the ANCA-WR Education Committee continues to create partnerships with school districts, college boards, educators, administrators, local chapters, ANCA-WR committees, and community organizations throughout the region who in return helped fulfill that mission.

In the last year, the Education Committee went above and beyond their expected goals of the year. In February, hundreds gathered to celebrate and honor 11 outstanding educators for their dedication to teaching the Armenian Genocide in California public schools at the second annual Armenian Genocide Education Awards Luncheon. This event once again celebrated educators who have creatively taught the Armenian Genocide within their school communities, across different courses such as social science, English language arts, music, art, theater and film.

In the month of April, members of the committee were invited to numerous public high schools and middle schools in order to present about the Armenian Genocide. Through the ANCA-WR initiative "America We Thank you: An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief, hundreds of students across different school districts were able to learn about America's first nationally organized philanthropic effort, which rescued 132,000 orphans of the Armenian Genocide as well as the history of the Armenian Genocide through these presentations. Also in the month of April, the Education Committee held an Armenian Genocide Education Workshop featuring Dr. Rubina Peroomian at the Glendale Public Library. At this workshop, educators from Armenian schools were invited and the preparation for designing a curriculum for genocide education was discussed.

May proved to be a busy month regarding genocide education. In the first week, CA State Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair of the Senate Budget Sub Committee on Education Finance, invited Roxanne Makasdjian, Executive Director of the Genocide Education Project, Dean Cain, Producer of the "Architects of Denial," and Nora Hovsepian, Chair of the ANCA-WR, to testify before the State Senate on the importance of Genocide Education and Genocide Curriculum. A few weeks later, the Senate Budget Committee adopted Senator Anthony Portantino's proposals, which included a \$500,000 state grant to create study guides for California schools to properly teach the Armenian Genocide, into the Senate Budget.

Also in May, the Education Committee in collaboration with the Glendale Public Library celebrated the publication of "Under the Light of the Moon" by ANCA-WR Education Committee member Laura Michael and illustrator Aram Gaboudian with a traditional Armenian blessing of the book. "Under the Light of the Moon" is a children's chapter book set in 1924. After the Armenian Genocide had ended, ten-year-old Lucine finds herself in a Near East Relief orphanage in Athens, Greece. There are thousands of other children like her, wondering when and if they will ever see their families again. Meanwhile, in America, child actor Jackie Coogan is determined to help these children. Based on the real experiences of the orphans of the Armenian Genocide, including the author's great-grandparents, and the heroic work of Jackie Coogan and Near East Relief, "Under the Light of the Moon" is a story of hope and survival during a dark time in world history and will go a long way in teaching children about the lessons and consequences of genocide.

ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

No other Armenian-American public affairs organization in the United States benefits more from young activists than ANCA-WR. Hundreds of high school and college students and young professionals volunteer their time, energy, and talent to make the ANCA-WR the premier organization it is today. Through its internship and development programs and its special relationship with the oldest and most active Armenian American youth groups - the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) and the Armenian Student Associations (ASA) on campuses across the Western United States - the ANCA-WR fosters a spirit of community service, participation, and leadership in our community's youth. By engaging the youth with past and current work being done to advance the Armenian Cause, future generations are given the tools and opportunity to build upon and improve on the work of their predecessors. These efforts provide a valuable foundation for creating a new generation of Armenian-Americans who will be prepared and eager to advance Armenian issues for decades to come.



ANCA-WR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Acknowledging the importance of providing a pipeline of support to the next generation of our community's leaders, in 2018 the ANCA-WR continued to educate, motivate, and activate our youth through its hands-on internship program. During their tenure, interns are given valuable opportunities to interact with public officials, develop leadership and advocacy skills, represent the ANCA-WR at community and media events, organize various grassroots campaigns and events, work with ANCA-WR and local chapter leadership as well as participate in weekly educational lectures. This year, we continued our seasonal internship and produced 8 interns. Among some of the main projects and initiatives worked on by our interns was HyeVotes, discussing Hye Tad with over 100 campers at each session of AYF Camp, and supporting our various committees. The multi-faceted internship compounds professional skill building with networking opportunities to promote well-rounded individuals with an in-depth understanding of community issues as well as advocacy efforts on the local, regional, and federal levels to serve in our community and on future ANCA Western Region and local chapter committees. The program hosts spring, summer, and fall sessions.

ANCA LEO SARKISIAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

During the summer of 2018, the ANCA-WR also sponsored three students to participate in the prestigious ANCA Leo Sarkisian Internship Program in Washington, DC. The internship program provides Armenian American youth leaders hailing from California to Massachusetts, Michigan and Montreal, all gathering in Washington, DC for a common purpose to enhance their leadership in advancing Armenian American policy priorities and learn about the inner workings of the American political system during this eight-week training session in the nation's capital. After completion of the ANCA Leo Sarkisian Internship Program, one of our participants decided to remain in Washington, D.C. to join ANCA's Capital Gateway Fellowship Program in order to continue her time spent there.



TEACHING HYE TAD 101 TO HUNDREDS OF CAMPERS AT AYF CAMP

With a spirit that would have been admired by the pioneer of Armenian American political activism Vahan Cardashian, the ANCA-WR was busy this summer, teaching hundreds of AYF Camp Big Pines campers that their vote in our democracy matters. Over the course of the summer of 2018, the ANCA-WR with the help of summer interns gave an overview of Hye Tad and of the works of the ANCA through various presentations. Some weeks we conducted mock congressional elections, where campers gained real-time experience of what it is like to participate in a real election. Other weeks we discussed how young advocates could have a role in our ANCA initiatives and lastly, we led an activity that allowed campers to divide into groups in order to create a new Armenia, based on whatever laws, type of leadership, flag, and other issues that they wanted to address. The ANCA leadership, week in and week out, shared with the campers that in order to make a difference in their communities, they need to be active and not just be bystanders. This fact, of the need to be directly involved in elections, by voting or campaigning for a candidate, represented the “teachable moment” that most AYF campers took away from their ANCA-WR Hye Tad 101 presentations.

ANCA-WR WALTER AND LAUREL KARABIAN FELLOWSHIP FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Building on opportunities already provided to youth and young professionals, the ANCA-WR also established the Walter and Laurel Karabian Fellowship for Public Policy. The nine month-long fellowship, launched in 2016, is the first Sacramento-based program of its kind and promotes the vision and experience of its benefactor, Walter Karabian, who was the first Armenian American to serve in the California State Assembly. Its goal is to prepare the next generation of Armenian-American political leaders through policy research, analysis projects and placements in state and administrative offices, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, labor unions and consulting firms, while also enhancing their professional and networking skills. This program allows participants to gain an in depth understanding of nonprofit work, advocacy organization, think tanks, electoral politics, labor, as well as California State Legislature in general.



YOUNG ARMENIAN PROFESSIONALS COMING TOGETHER

With the creation of the revamped ANCA Professional Network Board, the ANCA PN began this last year inspired and motivated to bring together young Armenian professionals from all backgrounds to engage and connect. In the last several months, the ANCA PN has organized multiple mixers including one at the Giggles Lounge in Glendale in collaboration with Birthright Armenia, Armenian Volunteer Corps, AGBU Young Professionals, the Armenian Professional Society, the Armenian Professional Network – Los Angeles Chapter, and Nerouj where over 400 young Armenian professionals attended. This mixer also helped raise \$8,620 for OneArmenia and the Halo Trust's #JobsNotMines campaign, which aims to train and employ two teams of 8 local deminers over the next two years, providing them with a steady, higher-than-average income as they work to clear the last remaining minefield near Kavak Monastery in Artsakh. Future plans include an ANCA PN career fair and additional networking and mentoring events. The ANCA PN is an association composed of Armenian American young professionals in the western United States with expertise in multiple fields who are brought together by heritage, social responsibility and a desire to expand the civic awareness and involvement of Armenian American professionals working in both the public and private sectors.

SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Advocacy Day

In June, the ANCA-WR along with the ANCA-Eastern Region joined the ANCA National office in Washington D.C. for a three-day Capitol Hill celebration of a century of U.S.-Armenia friendship, which included a special Congressional reception headlined by Armenian President Armen Sarkissian, an advocacy day, and the unveiling of Armen Garo's (Garegin Pasternadjian) bust at the Armenian Embassy.

The ANCA-WR led activists from respective states in the western region to the country's capitol where they were able to educate their state legislators face to face. Armenian American activists took to Capitol Hill to advance the ANCA policy priorities – a qualitative strengthening of U.S.-Armenian relations, security and status for the independent Artsakh Republic, and justice for the Armenian Genocide.

Among the bipartisan Senate and House offices visited by ANCA-WR advocates were: Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Representatives: Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Michael Coffman (R-CO), Jim Costa (D-CA), John Curtis (R-UT), Ruben Kihuen (D-NV), Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), Jared Polis (D-CO), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Albio Sires (D-NJ), Scott Tipton (R-CO), and David Valadao (R-CA).



SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Architects of Denial Screening at City Hall

In April, the ANCA-WR co-hosted a screening of “Architects of Denial” with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and Councilman Paul Krekorian at Los Angeles City Hall. Over 70 staffers and elected officials attended the screening. “Architects of Denial” continues to serve as a great educational tool by providing a first person look at genocide through the eyes of survivors and experts graphically illustrating the connection between Turkey’s denial and the continuation of horrific human rights violations and anti-Armenian pogroms by Azerbaijan.



ANCA-WR Takes Part in LA County of Supervisors Armenian History Month

The ANCA-WR participated in LA County Board of Supervisors Armenian History Month and had the opportunity to nominate leaders in the Armenian community who have truly made a difference through their activism. Dr. Alina Dorian, who was subsequently appointed by Supervisor Kathryn Barger to the Los Angeles County Public Health Commission, was honored for her public service, dedication and professional expertise. Dean Cain was also honored for his contributions to the feature film “Architects of Denial” and his efforts to educate the public about genocide.



SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Senate Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange Hosts Inaugural Hearing

The 30th anniversary of the Sumgait Pogroms was commemorated at the California State Capitol during the inaugural hearing of the Senate Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange, founded and chaired by Senator Anthony Portantino (SD-25). The committee hearing entitled “California, Armenia and Artsakh Trade Agreements, Civil Rights Issues and University of California Divestiture and Budget Impacts” covered a wide array of issues of importance to the Armenian-American community and featured moving testimony by attorney, activist and Baku Pogroms survivor Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, updates on the establishment of a trade Memorandum of Understanding between Armenia and California, and the latest in the effort toward divestment from the Turkish Government by the University of California.



ANCA-WR Annual Gala

The Annual Gala is the premiere event for the ANCA-WR and the Armenian-American community, where activists, supporters, donors, and public officials come together to acknowledge the work of the organization and pay homage to annual honorees whose contributions to the Armenian Cause are recognized each year. The annual dinner provides crucial financial support to the ANCA-WR, which serves as a vital center for advocacy, activism, education, and community development.



SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Grassroots Conference

This biennial conference brings together experts and hundreds of activists from all over the world to analyze issues related to the Armenian Cause and to develop and promote new avenues of leadership and advocacy. The ANCA-WR Grassroots Conference is composed of a groundbreaking series of informative and inspirational panel discussions, which successfully educate and empower the community to become a more active and dominant force in the collective pursuit of the Armenian Cause. This dynamic 2-day conference consists of compelling discussions on topics such as Advocacy through Film & the Arts, Transnational Justice: The Road to Reparations, Politics in Action: Congress On Our Side, Profiles in Courage, and ANCA On The Move. Some of last year's panelists included Charles Mahtesian, Senior Politics Editor at POLITICO, Congressman Ed Royce, Chairman of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, Jessica Peake, the Assistant Director of The Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law and the Director of International and Comparative Law Program at UCLA School of Law, Montel Williams, producer of "Architects of Denial," and Garo Paylan, Armenian Member of the Turkish Parliament.



SIGNATURE MOMENTS

HyeCitizen

True to its mission to empower Armenian American communities, the ANCA-WR this year launched HyeCitizen – a bilingual training video for the United States Citizenship Civics Test designed specifically for native Armenian speakers. Produced by ANCA-WR's Denver-based Community Development Coordinator and Political Scientist Simon Maghakyan, with narration, production, and translation assistance from ANCA-Colorado volunteers Susanna Avagyan, Angela Ginosyan, George Cole, and Hasmik Kachaturian, HyeCitizen is a 50-minute-long bilingual video training for native Armenian speakers for the Civics Test required for US naturalization. The training covers all 100 questions issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Service, including 57 questions about principles of American democracy, system of government, and rights and responsibilities, 30 questions covering topics from the colonial period to the past few decades, and 13 questions about geography, holidays, and national symbols. The training has built-in bilingual closed-caption, as well as pronunciation tips, making it accessible to individuals with hearing impairment. It is available for free of charge to the public at www.ancawr.org/hyecitizen



ANCA AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Highlighting Japan-Armenia Relations

The ANCA-WR's Community Relations Committee and the Japan America Society of Southern California came together in March to honor the legacy of Viscount Eiichi Shibusawa while spotlighting a significant historical chapter in Japan-Armenia relations. Over 100 distinguished guests, community leaders, and supporters gathered at Vertigo in Glendale for the event entitled "Interpretation of the Legacy of Eiichi Shibusawa for the 21st Century: The Unknown History of Japan-Armenia Relations," which featured keynote speakers independent researcher Vicken Babkenian and Ken Shibusawa, the great-great grandson of Eiichi Shibusawa.

The purpose of the event was to uncover a Japanese link to Armenian history in the post genocide era. Babkenian, the author "Armenia, Australia and the Great War," has conducted extensive research on Japan's humanitarian response during and after the Armenian Genocide. He explained how the Armenian Relief Committee of Japan came to be formed in Tokyo, following a visit by the Rev. Loyal Wirt, the international commissioner of the American Near East Relief organization. Soon after its establishment, Viscount Eiichi Shibusawa became the Chairman of the Armenian Relief Committee of Japan and helped save the lives of hundreds of Armenian and Greek refugees and orphans of the Genocide.



Building Coalitions

Throughout the year, the ANCA-WR continued to build coalitions while strengthening our relations with various organizations in the Western U.S. In July, we joined with our Assyrian brothers and sisters and stood in solidarity to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the Assyrian Genocide that took the lives of 750,000 people. ANCA-WR Board Member Joseph Kaskanian was also invited to speak at the event where he expressed his support to the Assyrian community and stressed the significance of further cooperation. The ANCA-WR continued to work year-round with the Assyrian American Association of Southern California. The ANCA-WR also supported the annual gala of the American Hellenic Council. And as always, in addition to leaders and activists from the Assyrian and Greek communities, 38 other ethnic and human rights groups organizations joined forces as coalition partners on April 24's March for Justice.

ANCA AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Marching on For Justice

The ANCA-WR is a proud member of the Armenian Genocide Committee-Western United States of America (AGC-WUSA), a coalition of twenty Armenian organizations and religious entities. The committee was established to steer and coordinate the multifaceted commemorative activities for the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in the Western United States and has continued its work annually thereafter. The March for Justice on April 24, 2018, brought out tens of thousands of Armenians and supporters, who marched through Los Angeles to the Turkish Consulate, demanding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish government and justice for its consequences. Joining the March for Justice in solidarity were thirty-eight organizations of various ethnic backgrounds, including Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish, Jewish, Palestinian, as well as numerous human rights groups, unions, student associations, and other advocacy organizations. Since the Armenian Genocide Centennial of 2015, the annual March for Justice has served as a collective rallying cry by Armenians and non-Armenians alike to finally resolve the issue of this unpunished crime against humanity.



RAPID RESPONDERS PROGRAM

Even more so than in previous years, the ANCA-WR has continued its efforts to unify a broad coalition of Armenian-Americans by urging community members to sign up for the Rapid Responders program. It is easier than ever to ensure the Armenian-American voice is heard in the Halls of Government on the federal, state and local levels, with the ANCA Rapid Responder System. In the last year, the ANCA-WR increased its number of Rapid Responders by 50 percent.

By signing up, constituents allow the ANCA to automatically send pre-approved letters on their behalf to their legislators. This system ensures that the views and values of Armenian-Americans are shared immediately with key decision makers, every time that the ANCA posts an action alert. This is especially vital when events develop quickly and every minute counts. Through the Rapid Responder program, ANCA-WR activists have sent thousands upon thousands of letters, to have their voices heard when quick action was required and the loud, unified voice of the Armenian-American Community was needed to assert its collective power.

HYEVOTES

HyeVotes is a project of the ANCA-Western Region to encourage higher civic participation in the community through voter registration and voting. The HyeVotes initiative is intended to register and encourage the community through volunteerism by partnering with a network of nonprofit organizations, student groups, and community members to vote in elections while also serving as a source for voter information. The fundamental goals of the ANCA-WR HyeVotes initiative are to increase the number of registered voters, to create public awareness regarding the importance of civic engagement and the electoral process and to provide voters with comprehensive nonpartisan information about their ballots.

Through the active participation and involvement of a large number of Armenian community organizations and entities, Hye Votes reaches large segments of the community which have either refrained from registering or which have not actively voted in recent elections. By recognizing the power of the internet, the ANCA-WR continued to build on its previous year's commitment to keep the community informed of critical issues through Action Alerts, and ANCA-WR's social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Armenian-Americans are better connected than ever to each other, to elected officials, the media, and the general public. This past year, the Armenian American community reached an unprecedented level of activism in the LA General electoral elections held in May. Although we were faced with both failures and successes, the endorsed candidates felt victorious nonetheless, with a strong track record of support on Armenian-American priorities and issues, and plan to keep their audiences aware of ongoing issues in the political arena.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

On September 25, 2018 the ANCA-WR's Hye Votes initiative collaborated with LA City, Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School, and Rose and Alex Pilibos High School to commemorate National Voter Registration Day. Sixteen, seventeen and eighteen-year-old students were given a presentation on why it is important to vote and to be active and engaged members of the community. After the presentation, a mock election was held after which students pre-registered to vote using the new application forms created by the State of California. It is extremely important for the Armenian community to make its voice heard and to have young and active voices in the community.



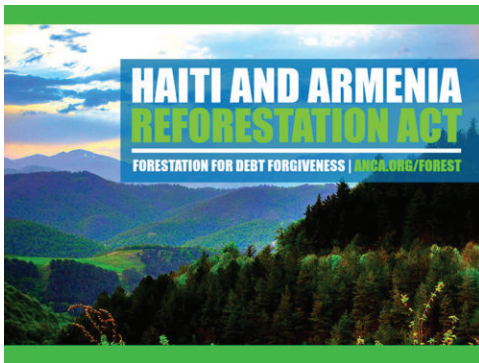
ANCA POLICY PRIORITIES

Haiti and Armenia Reforestation Act of 2018

Spearheaded by Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Katherine Clark (D-MA), this legislation would authorize the President to provide both Armenia and Haiti with grants, debt forgiveness, and technical assistance to reverse the effects of deforestation and to meet specific targets for the restoration of forest cover. The initial goal is to have Armenia increase from its current 6% forestation level to 12% forestation.

The Haiti and Armenia Reforestation Act would assist the two countries in developing proposals that:

- Encompass widely-accepted environmentally sustainable forestry and agricultural practices;
- Improve forest governance in ways that engage and protect local communities and groups;
- Enhance coordination among relevant Haitian and Armenian ministries and private organizations; and
- Develop short- and long-term performance metrics to measure results, to include technology to monitor the results of conservation efforts.



U.S.-Armenia Social Security Totalization Agreement

The ANCA has called upon the Social Security Administration to explore a Social Security Totalization Agreement with Armenia eliminating the danger of double taxation of pension benefits and, more broadly, clarifying the obligations and entitlements of workers who divide their careers between the United States and Armenia. A Totalization Agreement is a convention between two countries preventing duplicate Social Security contributions for the same income – effectively eliminating dual coverage and dual contributions (taxes) for the same work. Generally speaking, such accords ensure that workers only need to pay social security taxes to one country.

ANCA POLICY PRIORITIES

U.S.-Armenia Double Tax Treaty

Following the signing of the U.S.-Armenia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) in 2015, the ANCA has been working closely with Congressman Brad Sherman and his legislative team to encourage the Department of Treasury to negotiate a new U.S.-Armenia Double Tax Treaty.

A U.S.-Armenia Double Tax Treaty would establish a clear legal framework for investors and individuals that have business activities in both jurisdictions, preventing double taxation and facilitating the expansion of economic relations. It would also help reinforce the friendship of the American and Armenian peoples, anchoring Armenia to the West, and providing Yerevan with greater strategic options and independence in dealing with regional powers.



U.S.-Artsakh Travel and Communication Resolution

The goal of the U.S.-Artsakh Travel and Communication Resolution is to break down artificial barriers to unrestricted travel and open communication between the United States and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), with the introduction of the U.S.-Artsakh Travel and Communication Resolution.

The measure calls for a U.S. policy which would:

- 1) allow officials at all levels of the United States Government, including cabinet-level national security officials, general officers, and other executive branch officials, to travel to the Artsakh Republic and openly and directly communicate with their Artsakh counterparts;
- 2) encourage ongoing open communication, meetings, and other direct contacts between officials of Artsakh and the Executive and Legislative branches of the United States, state and local governments, and American civil society; and
- 3) seek the full and direct participation of the democratically-elected government of the Artsakh Republic in all OSCE and other negotiations regarding its future.



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Let us know you want to join in on the efforts. Submit form online at ancawr.org/getinvolved.



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