

City of Holyoke Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Sikh community, which originated in Punjab, India and began immigrating into the United States over 100 years ago, has played an important role in developing this country and this State; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion with nearly 30 million adherents, including roughly 700,000 in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Sikh Genocide of 1984 took place post assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Delhi, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Maharashtra beginning on November 1st, 1984 and lasting three days, an estimated 30,000+ Sikhs were brutally murdered or died as they were hunted in their homes, hacked, and burned alive; and

WHEREAS, the California State Assembly, on April 16, 2015, unanimously passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution 34, which recognizes the systematic and organized killings of Sikhs by the Indian government in Delhi and remembers those who lost their lives during the 1984 Sikh Genocide; and

WHEREAS, eyewitnesses, journalists, and human rights activists have compiled evidence showing that government and law enforcement officials organized, participated in, and failed to intervene to prevent the killings through direct and indirect means; and

WHEREAS, as recent as 2011, mass graves have been discovered in the villages of HondhChillar and Pataudi in Haryana, and many more will continue to be discovered in the future with Indian government officials and police flouting impunity; and

WHEREAS, the "Widow Colony" (the Tilak Vihar neighborhood in New Delhi) still houses thousands of Sikh women, who were forced to bear mass rape and witness the hacking, burning, and murder of their husbands, fathers, and sons, still are calling for justice against the perpetrators; and

WHEREAS, many of the survivors of the Sikh Genocide eventually immigrated to the United States and established large Sikh communities in places such as Fresno, Yuba City, Stockton, Fremont, Glenrock, New York City, and Philadelphia, among other places; and

WHEREAS, the Sikh community in America has recovered from the material damages of the Genocide, they continue to keep the memory alive and will never forget the Sikh Genocide of 1984; and

WHEREAS, for years, the term '1984 anti-Sikh riots' was used to describe the events of November 1984 which was a distortion and wrongly implied. Recognizing the state-sponsored violence that targeted Sikhs across India in 1984 is an important and historic step towards justice, accountability and reconciliation which we hope will be an example to other governments.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor Alex B. Morse, do recognize the November 1984 as

"ANTI-SIKH VIOLENCE IN INDIA AS GENOCIDE"

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Official Seal of the City of Holyoke to be affixed

Signed: _____

Alex B. Morse, Mayor

