



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 639

Resolution declaring November 28th as Albanian Independence Day in the city of New York.

By Council Member Gjonaj

Whereas, Albania is a country in southeastern Europe located on the western part of the Balkan Peninsula on the Strait of Otranto that borders the Adriatic and Ionian Seas on the west; and

Whereas, Albanians refer to themselves as Shqiptar and generally consider themselves to be descendants of the ancient Illyrians who lived in Central Europe and migrated south to the territory of Albania at the beginning of the Bronze Age 2000 BCE; and

Whereas, Albania's location on the Adriatic and Ionian seas have long served as a bridgehead for nations and empires, and as such, the Albanians were conquered by the Romans in the third century A.D. and later ruled by the Byzantine Empire in 395 A.D. and subsequently the Ottoman Turks in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century; and

Whereas, The Ottoman rule served to isolate Albania from Western civilization for more than four centuries, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Albania began to separate itself from Ottoman influence and rediscovered old kinships, traditions, and interests with the West; and

Whereas, The 1878 struggles for Albanian autonomy between the Albanian League and the Turkish army wrought further uprisings in 1910; and

Whereas, In October 1912, during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the first Balkan War, the head of the national assembly, Ismail Qemal, returned to Albania and declared Albania independent on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1912 in the town of Vlora; and

Whereas, Albanian independence was compromised when territory inhabited by ethnic Albanians was

lost to neighboring states on all sides, and particularly when Kosovo was ceded to Serbia in 1913 and when the Albania republic become a monarchy in 1928 , and again in 1939 when Mussolini ordered the Italian invasion and occupation; and

Whereas, Albania regained its independence after World War II and with the end of communism in 1991, adopted a free and democratic multi-party parliamentary system; and

Whereas, Albanians are among many groups to immigrate to the United States for reasons related to economic, religious and political turmoil; and

Whereas, Albanian immigrants have settled in New York City since the early 1920's and New York City has been home to many Albanians and Albanian-Americans including notable actors Regis Philben and brothers John and James Belushi; and

Whereas, The 2016 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau estimates over 41,000 Albanians and Albanian Americans now live in New York City, constituting one of the largest Albanian communities in the United States; and

Whereas, Their contributions to New York City includes many neighborhood restaurants, celebrations of culture, such as the annual Albanian Parade and arguably one of the most beloved individuals-St. Mother Teresa; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York declares November 28th as Albanian Independence Day in the city of New York.

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