

**STATE OF  
ILLINOIS**



**SENATE  
RESOLUTION**

ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate Resolution No. 89

Offered by Senator McConchie;  
Senator Harmon, President of the Senate;  
and all Senators.

WHEREAS, Bulgaria and the United States are strategic partners and allies, sharing ties of culture, tradition, and common interest; and

WHEREAS, The year 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the United States Senate's ratification of the Protocol for Accession of Bulgaria into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the 80th anniversary of the Bulgarian people's rescue of the Bulgarian Jews, the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Bulgaria, and the 145th anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria; and

WHEREAS, The first Bulgarian emigrants to Illinois arrived in the second half of the 19th century; and

WHEREAS, Granite City hosts the oldest Bulgarian American community in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The prominent Bulgarian American banker, Henry Karandzhov, served as the president of the Granite City Trust and Savings Bank and as the president of the Masonic Temple Association, receiving the title of Scoutmaster; and

WHEREAS, The first Bulgarian emigrants to Chicago, who began to arrive as early as the 1870s, were students sent by American protestant missionaries for study in the United States; and

WHEREAS, While most of these students returned to Bulgaria, some remained and created a Bulgarian American community in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Bulgaria was admitted into and permitted to display an exhibit at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, an event hailed by the Chicago Tribune as the first diplomatic recognition accorded to Bulgaria as an independent state; and

WHEREAS, Aleko Konstantinov, a famous Bulgarian writer, recounted his journey to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in his book, *To Chicago and Back*, which became instrumental in encouraging generations of Bulgarians to emigrate to Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of Bulgarians arrived in the United States from the geographic region of Macedonia at the beginning of the 20th century, pursuing freedom and fleeing the devastation and horrors occasioned by regional unrest; and

WHEREAS, The first Bulgarian Mission with its own priest was established in Madison in 1907; and

WHEREAS, Madison is home to Illinois' oldest Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Holy Trinity, built by Macedonian Bulgarians with the current church building existing since 1910; and

WHEREAS, The Granite City Bulgarian community published the first Bulgarian newspaper in the United States, the *Vox Populi*, or *Voice of the People*, from 1907 to 1950; other Bulgarian newspapers, such as the *New World* (1908-1909), *Emigrant* (1909), *Freedom* (1914-1917), *Macedonian Tribune* (1927-present), and others, followed in its wake; and  
WHEREAS, Stoyan Yurukov became the first Bulgarian pilot to fly in the skies above Chicago in 1912, charting the course for many other Bulgarian pilots who have lived and worked in the Windy City; and

WHEREAS, Bulgarian emigrants from the region of Macedonia founded the Macedonian Patriotic Organization in 1922; the organization continues to work for human, civil, and economic rights of all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, who hail from the geographic region; and

WHEREAS, Assen Hristov Jordanoff, a Bulgarian American engineer and pilot, emigrated to the United States after World War I, becoming one of the fathers of civil aviation in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Macedonian Bulgarian Stoyan Christowe, a journalist for the *Chicago Daily News*, wrote a book titled *This is My Country*, a semi-autographical book about the immigrants arriving in the United States from southeast Europe at the beginning of the 20th century and a book found on the bedside table of President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time of his death; and

WHEREAS, John V. Atansoff, a Bulgarian American, created the first automatic electronic digital computer in 1939, an invention for which he was presented the National Medal for Science and Technology by President George H. W. Bush in 1990; and

WHEREAS, In the Spring of 1943, the Bulgarian people resisted Nazi pressure to deport Bulgarian Jews to Nazi concentration camps and, in doing so, rescued approximately 50,000 Bulgarian Jews from the worst terrors of the Nazi regime; and

WHEREAS, Illinois became a safe haven for many Bulgarian political dissidents and refugees, fleeing from the repressive terrors of communism; and

WHEREAS, The fall of the Berlin Wall and the following dissolution of the Soviet Union freed the Bulgarian people to proclaim and institute a democratic and multiparty political system; and

WHEREAS, In 1960, Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley proclaimed March 3 (Bulgarian Liberation Day) as Bulgaria Day in Chicago, instituting an annual Bulgarian flag-raising ceremony at Daley Plaza in Chicago that continues until this day; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago metropolitan area is today considered the home of the largest Bulgarian diaspora; and

WHEREAS, The two Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Churches in the Chicago metropolitan area, St. Sophia (established in 1938) and St. John of Rila (established in 1996), along with the Bulgarian Evangelical Church (New Life), serve as social and religious centers, maintaining Bulgarian culture and traditions; and

WHEREAS, Illinois is home to 13 Bulgarian Sunday Schools that perpetuate Bulgarian language, culture, and history in our communities; and

WHEREAS, Bulgarian Americans have greatly enriched the cultural, technological, and civic life of Illinois, contributing through their cultural centers, schools, churches, dance groups, businesses, and other civic organizations to the social, cultural, civil, and economic development of the State of Illinois; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we send our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the people of the Republic of Bulgaria as they celebrate the 145th anniversary of their liberation on March 3, 2023; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we confirm the rich friendship that binds our peoples together; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we declare March of 2023 as Bulgarian American Heritage Month in the State of Illinois; and be it further

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the Consul General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Chicago, President Joe Biden, and all members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.



Senator Dan McConchie