

California State Senate

SENATOR
ANTHONY J. PORTANTINO
TWENTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



September 19, 2020

Senator Anthony J. Portantino's Statement St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church Center Fire

Our churches and church facilities are peaceful places for communities to pray, congregate and support one another. They should not be subjected to arson, vandalism and hate crimes. My heart breaks for Very Reverend Father Smpad Saboundjian, the entire St. Gregory the Illuminator congregation and the greater Armenian American community for this unnecessary act of intimidation. I fully encourage the San Francisco Police Department's investigation to swiftly determine the cause of the blaze and hold those responsible strictly accountable under the law. This wonderful congregation has recently been subjected to hate crimes that harm the San Francisco Armenian American Community but also harm all of us. It is important to remember that what affects one community affects all communities. I have visited the KZV Armenian School affiliated with St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church and enjoyed fellowship and celebration in the Khachaturian Center with friends and families who pray at the church and send their children to the KZV School. They should be able to do so without fear, threats and arson. We should all stand in solidarity to oppose every effort to inject that threat into this peaceful community. I join with many others wishing the St. Gregory the Illuminator congregation a swift rebuilding of its prized and historic agoump.

Hon. Anthony J. Portantino
State Senator
25th State Senate District