



Proclamation

- WHEREAS, religious freedom is something that we as Americans often take for granted, but it is important to recognize that in other parts of the world, many people are not afforded those same rights; and
- WHEREAS, in recent years, the Turkish Government has refused to uphold or safeguard religious freedom, and as a result, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey, continues to suffer threats, abuses, confiscation of property, and the threat of dissolution; and
- WHEREAS, the Turkish State does not recognize the "Ecumenical" title and status of the Patriarch and Patriarchate. In addition, the Turkish government has prohibited private religious education, and confiscated thousands of properties including churches, orphanages, monastery homes, apartment buildings, schools and other land belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and
- WHEREAS, these measures have adversely affected the lives of all Orthodox Christians in Turkey, impinging on their inalienable right to practice any religion they may choose; and
- WHEREAS, the European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, has been in accession negotiations with Turkey since 2003 because their treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate violates the Union's goals of eliminating discrimination based on any ground, including religion; and
- WHEREAS, the State of Illinois recognizes the contributions of Orthodox Christians to American culture and to cultures across the globe; and
- WHEREAS, on behalf of our Greek Orthodox community in Illinois, I join in supporting measures to end Turkey's oppression of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Church:
- THEREFORE, I, Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby call upon the Government of Turkey to eliminate all forms of discrimination, particularly those based on race or religion, and to recognize the property rights and human rights of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of over 250 million Orthodox Christians throughout the world.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,
this TWENTY-SEVENTH day of APRIL, in
the Year of Our Lord two thousand and
SEVEN, and of the State of Illinois
the one hundred and EIGHTY-NINTH

Dee Dee White

SECRETARY OF STATE

Rod Blagojevich

GOVERNOR