

1 WHEREAS, since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical
 2 Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to the religious
 3 coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and
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5 WHEREAS, this religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the
 6 Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered a minority religion by the Government
 7 of Turkey; and
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9 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey has limited the candidates available
 10 to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish nationals, and
 11 from the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at the turn of the
 12 twentieth century and due to the continued policies during this period by the
 13 Government of Turkey, there remain less than three thousand (3,000) of the
 14 Ecumenical Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and
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16 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey closed the Theological School on the
 17 Island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to reopen, thus impeding
 18 training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and
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20 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey has confiscated nearly ninety-four
 21 percent (94%) of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a
 22 tax of forty-two percent (42%), retroactive to 1999, on the Balouki Hospital
 23 and Home for the Aged, a charity hospital owned by the Ecumenical
 24 Patriarchate; and
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26 WHEREAS, the European Union, a political and economic union of nation
 27 states with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its
 28 people, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 2, 2005; and
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30 WHEREAS, the European Union defined membership criteria for accession
 31 at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to
 32 achieve certain levels of reform, including stability of institutions
 33 guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for and
 34 protection of minorities and human rights; and
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36 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey's current treatment of the Ecumenical

William A. Rife
 Chairman of the Senate

Carrie Webb

1 Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the
2 European Union; and

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4 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in Arkansas and throughout the United
5 States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions
6 of the Government of Turkey,

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8 NOW THEREFORE,

9 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE
10 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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12 THAT the members of the Arkansas General Assembly urge the Government
13 of Turkey to:

14 (1) Uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without
15 compromise;

16 (2) Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

17 (3) Grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
18 recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy of all
19 nationalities; and

20 (4) Respect the property rights and human rights of the
21 Ecumenical Patriarchate.

22

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of
24 this resolution to:

25 (1) The President of the United States;

26 (2) The United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey;

27 (3) The Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United
28 States; and

29 (4) The members of the Arkansas Congressional Delegation.

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APPROVED  GOVERNOR



Carlie Wells

3-18-09 3

Carlie Wells