

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 11

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

212th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2006 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator JOSEPH M. KYRILLOS, JR.

District 13 (Middlesex and Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Turkey to respect rights and religious freedoms of Ecumenical Patriarchate.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** urging Turkey to respect the rights and
2 religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

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4 **WHEREAS**, The Government of Turkey refuses to recognize the
5 rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the
6 head of the Greek Orthodox Christian Church which is a
7 minority religion in Turkey; and

8 **WHEREAS**, The Government of Turkey has limited the candidates
9 available to the Holy Synod for selection as the Ecumenical
10 Patriarch to Turkish nationals and reneged on its agreement to
11 reopen the Theological School at Halki, thus impeding training
12 for the clergy; and

13 **WHEREAS**, The Government of Turkey has confiscated most of the
14 properties of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and has placed a 42
15 percent retroactive tax on the Balukli Hospital which is run by
16 the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

17 **WHEREAS**, The European Union, a group of nations with a common
18 goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, began
19 accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The European Union defined membership criteria for
21 accession to the European Union at the Copenhagen European
22 Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to have achieved
23 certain levels of reform, including stability of institutions
24 guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law, and
25 respect for and protection of minorities and human rights; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Under the terms of the draft European Union
27 Constitution, current and prospective member nations should
28 have the goal of eliminating discrimination based on any ground,
29 such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features,
30 language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion,
31 national minority membership, property, birth, disability, age, or
32 sexual orientation; and

33 **WHEREAS**, Turkey's current treatment of the Ecumenical
34 Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and
35 goals of the European Union; now, therefore,

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37 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
38 *State of New Jersey:*

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40 1. The Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey call
41 on the Government of Turkey to eliminate all forms of
42 discrimination, particularly those based on race or religion, and
43 immediately grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate
44 international recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to
45 train clergy of all nationalities. New Jersey calls on the
46 Government of Turkey to respect the property rights and human
47 rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

1 2. The Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey call
2 on the Government of Turkey to pledge to uphold and safeguard
3 religious and human rights without compromise and encourages
4 Turkey to continue the advancement of processes and programs to
5 modernize and democratize its own society, in light of its potential
6 accession to the European Union.

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8 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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13 This resolution urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious
14 freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Turkey continues to limit
15 the rights of minority Greek Orthodox Christians through acts such
16 as seizing property, including a major hospital, orphanage and
17 theological school.

18 The resolution urges Turkey to recognize its ill treatment of the
19 Ecumenical Patriarchate and change its treatment so that, if and
20 when it is accepted as a member of the European Union, its goals
21 and actions will comply with the draft European Union Constitution
22 and mirror those of other member nations. The draft Constitution
23 of the European Union states that the Union's values are "respect for
24 human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and
25 respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging
26 to minorities." It states that the goal of the Union is to "strengthen
27 the protection of fundamental rights in light of changes in society,
28 social progress and scientific and technological developments...."
29 Turkey did not satisfactorily reform its treatment of the Patriarchate
30 before accession discussions began with the European Union on
31 October 3, 2005, but is urged to do so during such negotiations.