

**ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH HOUSE**

**RESOLUTION**

2009 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Gregory H. Hughes**

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This resolution of the House of Representatives urges the Government of Turkey to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch international recognition and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

► urges the Government of Turkey to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and

► urges the Government of Turkey to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

**Special Clauses:**

None

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*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the state of Utah:*

WHEREAS, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul, Turkey, is the Sacred See that presides in a spirit of brotherhood over a communion of self-governing churches of the Orthodox Christian world;

WHEREAS, the See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is the 269th in direct succession to the Apostle Andrew and holds titular primacy as primus inter pares, meaning "first among equals," in the community of Orthodox churches worldwide;

WHEREAS, in 1994, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along with leaders of the

30 Appeal of Conscience Foundation, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance,  
31 which brought together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith  
32 dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the ethnic conflict in the Caucasus region;

33 WHEREAS, in 1997, the United States Congress awarded Ecumenical Patriarch  
34 Bartholomew the Congressional Gold Medal;

35 WHEREAS, following the terrorist attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001,  
36 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a group of international religious leaders to  
37 produce the first joint statement with Muslim leaders that condemned the attacks as  
38 "antireligious";

39 WHEREAS, in October 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with Christian, Jewish,  
40 and Muslim leaders, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance II to further promote  
41 peace and stability in southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region, and Central Asia via religious  
42 leaders' interfaith dialogue, understanding, and action;

43 WHEREAS, the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly 2,000 years,  
44 numbers approximately 300 million members worldwide with more than 2 million members in  
45 the United States;

46 WHEREAS, since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in  
47 Turkey has been a living testament to the religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims;

48 WHEREAS, this religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the Ecumenical  
49 Patriarchate is considered a minority religion by the Turkish government;

50 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey has limited the candidates available to hold the  
51 office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish nationals;

52 WHEREAS, from the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at the turn of  
53 the 20th century and due to the continued policies during this period by the Turkish  
54 government, there remain less than 3,000 of the Ecumenical Patriarch's flock left in Turkey  
55 today;

56 WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey closed the Theological School on the island of  
57 Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to reopen, thus impeding training for Orthodox

58 Christian clergy;

59 WHEREAS, the Turkish government has confiscated nearly 94% of the Ecumenical  
60 Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42% tax, retroactive to 1999, on the Baloukli  
61 Hospital and Home for the Aged, a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

62 WHEREAS, the European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of  
63 promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, began accession negotiations with Turkey  
64 on October 3, 2005;

65 WHEREAS, the European Union defined membership criteria for accession at the  
66 Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to achieve certain  
67 levels of reform, including stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the  
68 rule of law, and respect for and protection of minorities and human rights;

69 WHEREAS, the Turkish government's current treatment of the Ecumenical  
70 Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union;

71 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in Utah and throughout the United States stand to  
72 lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions of the Turkish government; and

73 WHEREAS, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order of St. Andrew  
74 the Apostle, a group of laymen who each have been honored with a patriarchal title, or  
75 "offikion," by the Ecumenical Patriarch for their outstanding service to the Orthodox Church,  
76 will send an American delegation to Turkey to meet with Turkish government officials, as well  
77 as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regarding the Turkish  
78 government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate:

79 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
80 state of Utah urges the Government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human  
81 rights without compromise and cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the state of Utah  
83 urges the Government of Turkey to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international  
84 recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and to  
85 respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

**H.R. 2****Enrolled Copy**

86           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of  
87 the United States, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United  
88 States House of Representatives, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the  
89 Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States, and to the members of Utah's  
90 congressional delegation.