



Washington State Senate

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 2005

February 16, 2012

Dear President Obama,

We write to you to express our deep concern that the policies of the Turkish government pose a serious threat to the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual home of the world's second largest Christian Church of approximately 300 million Orthodox Christians.

Nearly ninety-four percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties have already been confiscated by the Turkish government.

Turkish laws and policies restrict who may be elected Ecumenical Patriarch to Turkish citizens. These threaten the Ecumenical Patriarchate with extinction in the coming years. This cannot stand. Any of the nearly 300 million non-Turkish Orthodox Christians should be able to become Ecumenical Patriarch.

Millions of Orthodox Christian Americans-including those in the state of Washington-stand to lose their spiritual head, and all Christians will give up a crucial link to their history and forefathers, for it was within this 2,000 year old Sacred See that the test of the New Testament was codified, the canonical structure of the Christian Church was established and the Nicene Creed was created.

Thirty-eight (38) religious freedom resolutions and letter in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have been adopted in thirty-two (32) legislatures in the United State, urging the Turkish government to do essentially four things:

- *Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;**
- *Grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train its clergy;**
- *Respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate's property rights; and**
- *Re-open the Halki Theological School.**

We, the undersigned support these requests and share their concern for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and respectfully request that you communicate these concerns to the leaders of the Turkish government urging them to discontinue those policies which threaten the future existence of the Patriarchate.

Senator Mike Gadden District 4

Senator M. Kendall District 16

Senator [Signature] District 11

Senator Bob Watson District 7

Senator [Signature] District 47

Senator [Signature] District 8

Senator [Signature] District 33

Senator *St. Germain* District 18

Senator *Jim Hayft* District 15

Senator *Michael Baumgartner* District 6

Senator *Andy Hill* District 45

Senator *Janeal H. Newberry* District 13

Senator *Randi W. Becker* District 02

Senator *Val Twinn* District 39

Senator Ed King District 43

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Weller District 36

Senator Debbie Regala District 27

Senator [Signature] District 21

Senator [Signature] District 26

Senator Rachey Turner District 48

Senator Toni Sheldon District 35

Senator Linda Evans Larson District 12

Senator Doug Jensen District 42

Senator Daniel P. Swoboda District 20

Senator Donald M. Burt District 17

Senator Chris King District 14

Senator Mike Cornell District 28

Senator Chad Pflueg District 5

Senator D. Ort District 46

Senator Scott Hall District 44

Senator Steve Conway District 29

Senator K. R. District 40

Senator Ray Louprie Wagner District 10th

Senator Margarita Prentice District 11th

Senator Adam Fane District 37th

Senator Craig A. Peulemore District 49

Senator [Signature] District 24

Senator Sharon K Nelson District 34

Senator Christine Doljes District 23

Senator [Signature] District 38

Senator Rosemary Mc Aubuffe District 1

Senator Maralyn Chase District 32