

State of West Virginia Legislative Resolution



HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

[Adopted by the Legislature, March 8, 2008]

[By Delegates Cann, Fragale, Iaquina, Miley, Andes, Azinger, Beach, Browning, Campbell, Cowles, Craig, Crosier, Eldridge, Ellis, Frederick, Hartman, Higgins, Hrutkay, Kessler, Kominar, Long, Longstreth, Mahan, Manchin, Michael, C. Miller, Palumbo, Paxton, Pino, Porter, Reynolds, Rodighiero, Rowan, Shaver, Shook, Stalnaker, Stemple, Stephens, Swartzmiller, Tabb, Varner, Williams and Yost]

“Urging the Government of Turkey to cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, allow ecclesiastical succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.”

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; and

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

WHEREAS, In 1994 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along with leaders of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, which brought together Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the ethnic conflict in the Caucasus region; and

WHEREAS, Following the terrorist attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a group of international religious leaders to produce the first joint statement with Muslim leaders that condemned the 9/11 attacks as “anti-religious”; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the Government of Turkey refuses to recognize the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is considered a minority religion by the Turkish government; and