HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2009

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY TO GRANT THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION, ECCLESIASTICAL SUCCESSION AND THE RIGHT TO TRAIN CLERGY OF ALL NATIONALITIES AND TO RESPECT THE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)
To the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey:

Your memorialist respectfully represents:

Whereas, the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly two thousand years, numbers approximately 300 million members worldwide, with more than two 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 Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered a minority religion by the Turkish government; and

Whereas, the Government of Turkey has limited the candidates available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish nationals, and from the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at the turn of the twentieth century and due to the continued policies during this period by the Turkish government, there remain fewer than 3,000 members of the Ecumenical Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and

Whereas, the Government of Turkey closed the Theological School on the island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to reopen, thus impeding training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and

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

Whereas, this historic pillar of the Christian faith faces extinction if the current policies and practices of the Government of Turkey continue.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the Government of Turkey cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and work to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise.

2. That the Government of Turkey grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities and respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the Prime Minister of the Government of Turkey, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

PASSED BY THE HOUSE MARCH 18, 2008.

PASSED BY THE SENATE MAY 22, 2008.

Passed the House March 18, 2008
by the following vote: 39 Ayes,
20 Nays, 1 Not Voting

Speaker of the House
Norman L. Moore

Chief Clerk of the House

Passed the Senate May 22, 2008
by the following vote: 20 Ayes,
19 Nays, 1 Not Voting

President of the Senate
Timothy J. Bee

Secretary of the Senate
Chaminade Biddle

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

This Resolution received by the Secretary of State
this 27 day of May, 2008
at 1:16 o'clock P.M.

Janice K. Brewer
Secretary of State