SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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.

Subtitle

URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY TO GRANT
THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH APPROPRIATE
RECOGNITION AND RIGHTS.

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 holds titular primacy as
primus inter pares, meaning “first among equals”, in the community of
Orthodox churches worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly two
thousand (2,000) years, numbers approximately three hundred million
(300,000,000) members worldwide with more than two million (2,000,000)
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 Government of Turkey; 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 Government of Turkey, there remain less than three thousand (3,000) 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 Government of Turkey has confiscated nearly ninety-four percent (94%) of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a tax of forty-two percent (42%), retroactive to 1999, on the Balouki Hospital and Home for the Aged, a charity hospital owned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

WHEREAS, the European Union, a political and economic union of nation states with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its people, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 2, 2005; and

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

WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey's current treatment of the Ecumenical
Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union; and

WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in Arkansas and throughout the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions of the Government of Turkey,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the members of the Arkansas General Assembly urge the Government of Turkey to:

(1) Uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise;

(2) Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

(3) Grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and

(4) Respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to:

(1) The President of the United States;

(2) The United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey;

(3) The Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States; and

(4) The members of the Arkansas Congressional Delegation.

APPROVED
GOVERNOR

3-18-01

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