



North Carolina General Assembly
Senate Chamber
State Legislative Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

June 28, 2010

The Honorable Namik Tan
Ambassador, Turkish Embassy
2525 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Tan:

We, the following state Senators from the state of North Carolina, are writing you to express our profound concern that the policies of the Turkish government pose a grave threat to the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual home of the world's second largest Christian Church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul is the spiritual head of approximately 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide and the 269th direct descendant of the Apostle Andrew.

Nearly ninety-four percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties have already been confiscated by the Turkish government. Last year the European Court of Human Rights, in a unanimous 7-0 decision, condemned the Turkish government's illegal taking of the Patriarchal Orphanage. The Turkish government, which is a signatory to the treaty creating this Court, has so far not complied with the Court's ruling.

In addition, the Patriarchate's extinction in the coming years is essentially inevitable if Turkey continues its policy of prohibiting all 300 million non-Turkish Orthodox Christians from becoming Ecumenical Patriarch. Turkey itself has only about 2,500 remaining eligible Orthodox Christians, and they are a mostly elderly community.

Millions of Orthodox Christian Americans, including those in North Carolina, stand to lose their spiritual head, and all Christians will give up a crucial link to their history and forefathers. Within the 2,000 year old Sacred See, the text of the New Testament was codified, the canonical structure of the Christian Church was established, and the Nicene Creed was created.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's individual importance to America is reflected in the record number of Congressional cosponsors who bestowed on him our country's highest honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, an award also given to George Washington, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II.

During the past several years, numerous representatives of the United States government have urged Turkey to discontinue these policies which threaten the continued existence of

the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Presidents George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and the current president, Barack Obama, have called on Turkey to reopen the Halki Theological School, which the government closed in 1971. This was the only Orthodox Christian theological school in the country for the training of its Priests.

In addition, 28 Religious Freedom resolutions in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have already been adopted in 24 state legislatures, urging the Turkish government to discontinue these practices.

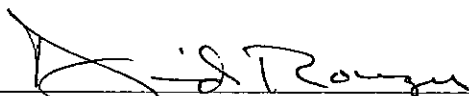
In order to add our support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the 28 other state legislative bodies that have done so to date, we have written you to urge the Government of Turkey to:

- (1) Reopen the Halki Theological School;
- (2) Respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;
- (3) Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and
- (4) Grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train its clergy.

Sincerely,



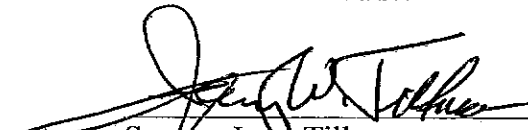
Senator Bob Rucho



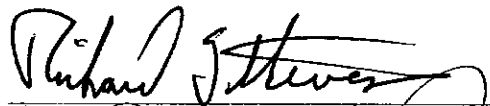
Senator David Rouzer




Senator Andrew Brock



Senator Jerry Tillman



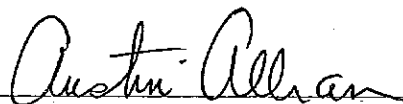
Senator Richard Y. Stevens



Senator Harris D. Blake



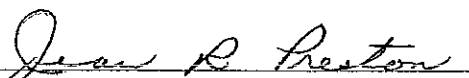
Senator James S. Forrester



Senator Austin M. Allran




Senator Fletcher L. Hartsell, Jr.



Senator Jean R. Preston



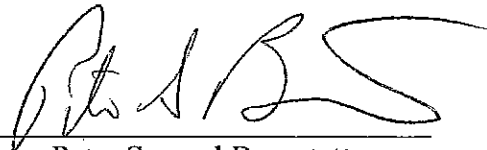
Senator Neal Hunt



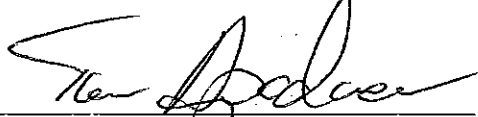
Senator Harry Brown



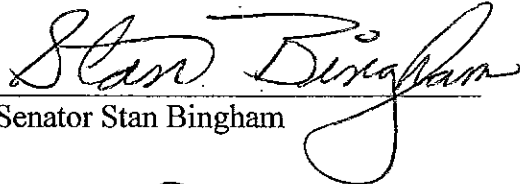
Senator W. Edward Goodall



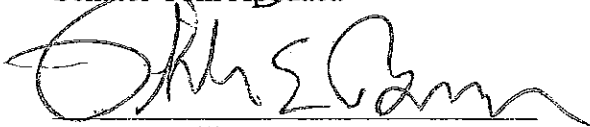
Senator Peter Samuel Brunstetter



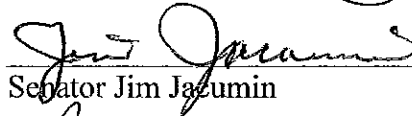
Senator Tom Apodaca



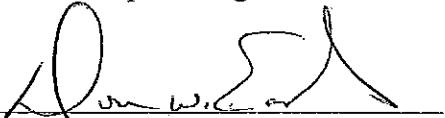
Senator Stan Bingham



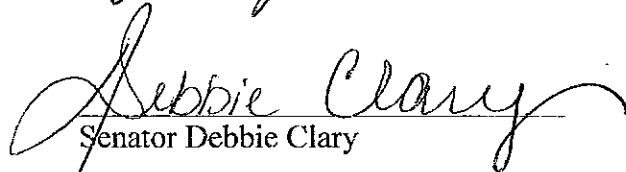
Senator Philip E. Berger



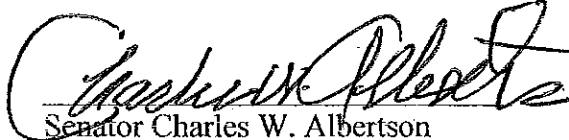
Senator Jim Jaramin




Senator Don East



Senator Debbie Clary



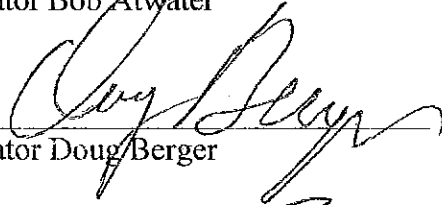
Senator Charles W. Albertson



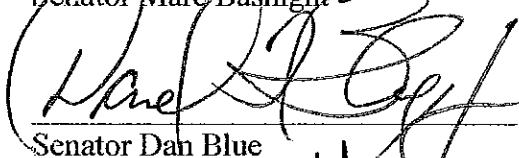
Senator Bob Atwater



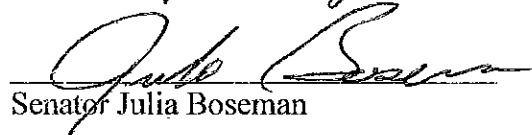
Senator Marc Basnight



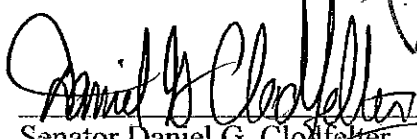
Senator Doug Berger



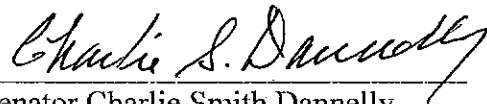
Senator Dan Blue



Senator Julia Boseman



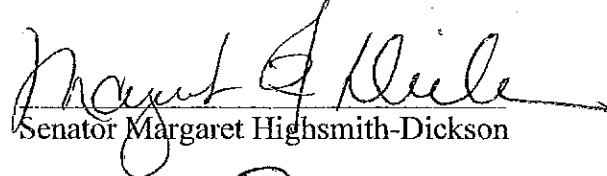
Senator Daniel G. Claffelter



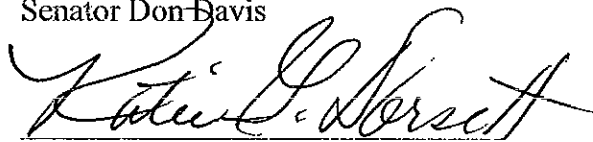
Senator Charlie Smith Dannelly



Senator Don Davis



Senator Margaret Highsmith-Dickson



Senator Katie G. Dorsett



Senator Tony Foriest



Senator Linda Garrou

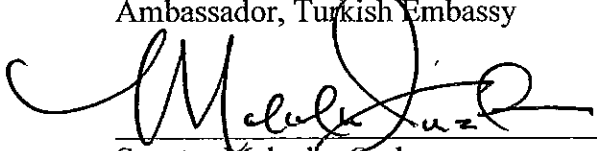


Senator Steve Goss

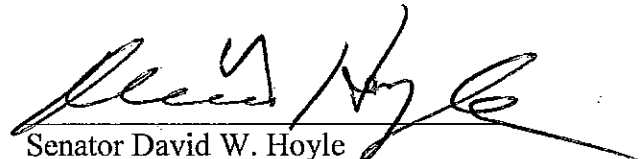
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Ambassador, Turkish Embassy

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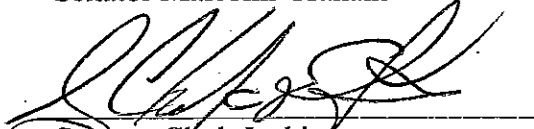
June 28, 2010



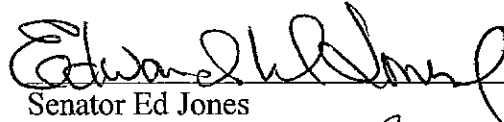
Senator Malcolm Graham



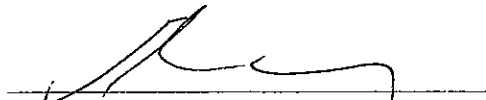
Senator David W. Hoyle



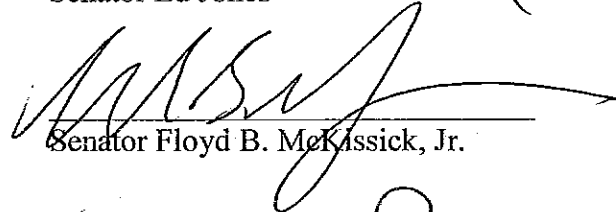
Senator Clark Jenkins



Senator Ed Jones



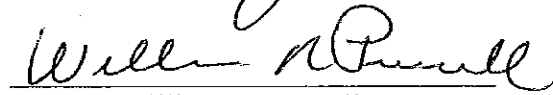
Senator Eleanor Kinnaird



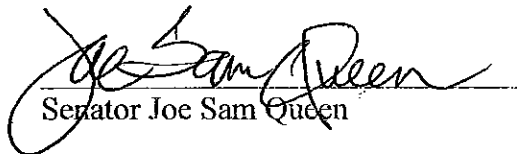
Senator Floyd B. McKissick, Jr.



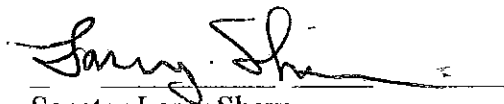
Senator Martin L. Nesbitt, Jr.



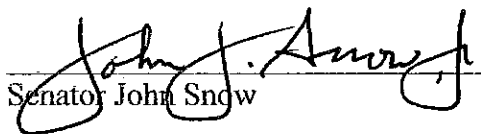
Senator William R. Purcell



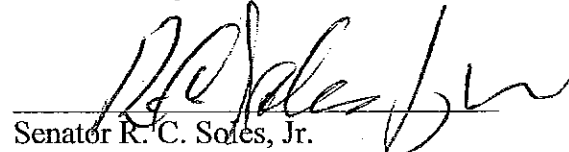
Senator Joe Sam Queen



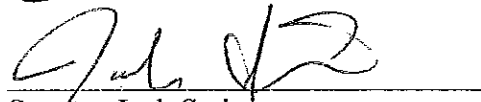
Senator Larry Shaw



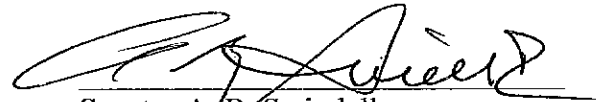
Senator John Snow



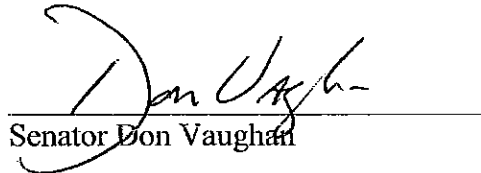
Senator R. C. Soles, Jr.



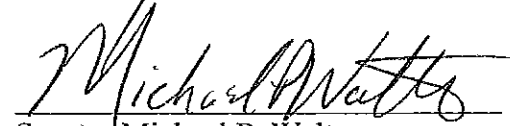
Senator Josh Stein



Senator A. B. Swindell



Senator Don Vaughan



Senator Michael P. Walters

cc: President Barack Obama
North Carolina Congressional Delegation