C O N C U R R E N T R E S O L U T I O N

To urge the Government of Turkey to respect the  
rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical  
Patriarchate.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING):

WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul,  
Turkey, is the spiritual home of the world's second largest  
Christian church; and

WHEREAS, Within the two-thousand-year-old Sacred See of the  
Ecumenical Patriarchate, the New Testament was codified and the  
Nicene Creed was created; and

WHEREAS, The Sacred See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch  
Bartholomew, one of the world's preeminent spiritual leaders and  
peacemakers representing 300 million Orthodox Christians  
worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has a record of  
reaching out and working for peace and reconciliation among all  
faiths and has fostered an interfaith dialogue among Christians,  
Jews, and Muslims; and

WHEREAS, Following the 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 these attacks as
"anti-religious"; and

WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate co-sponsored the
Conference on Peace and Tolerance in Istanbul, which issued the
Bosporus Declaration that stated that "A crime committed in the
name of religion is a crime against religion"; and

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

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has failed to recognize the
Ecumenical Patriarchate's international status; and

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited to Turkish
nationals the candidates available to hold the office of
Ecumenical Patriarch; and

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has confiscated 75% of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42%
retroactive tax on the Balukli Hospital of Istanbul, which is
operated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has reneged on its
agreement to reopen the Theological School at Halki, which the
Government of Turkey closed in 1971, thus impeding training for
the Orthodox clergy in Turkey; and

WHEREAS, The European Union, a group of nations with a common
goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, has
agreed to open accession negotiations with Turkey; and

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the draft European Union
Constitution, current and prospective member nations should have the goal of eliminating discrimination based upon grounds such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, national minority membership, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation; 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 Ohio 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, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, in adopting this resolution, urge the Government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise, grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate appropriate international recognition and ecclesiastic succession, grant the Ecumenical Patriarch the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and respect the property and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States, and the Ohio Congressional delegation.