

House Resolution

No. 876 Session of 2006

Session of 2006

INTRODUCED BY SOLOBAY, DeWEESE, BEBKO-JONES, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CRAHALLA, FLAHERTY, GEORGE, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HERSHEY, HICKERNELL, MANN, PALLONE, PISTELLA, REICHLEY, ROBERTS, TIGUE AND YOUNGBLOOD, OCTOBER 3, 2006

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
OCTOBER 3, 2006

A Resolution

- 1 Urging the Government of Turkey to cease its discrimination of
- 2 the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to grant the Ecumenical
- 3 Patriarch appropriate international recognition,
- 4 ecclesiastical succession and the right to train clergy of
- 5 all nationalities, and to respect the property rights and
- 6 human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- 7 WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul,
- 8 Turkey, is the sacred See that presides in a spirit of
- 9 brotherhood over a communion of the self-governing churches of
- 10 the Orthodox Christian world; and
- 11 WHEREAS, The See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,
- 12 who is the 269th in direct succession to the Apostle Andrew and
- 13 holds titular primacy as primus inter pares, meaning "first
- 14 among equals" in the community of Orthodox churches worldwide;
- 15 and
- 16 WHEREAS, In 1994 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along with
- 17 leaders of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, cosponsored the
- 18 Conference on Peace and Tolerance, which brought together
- 19 Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith
- 20 dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the ethnic conflict
- 21 in the Caucasus region; and
- 22 WHEREAS, In 1997 the Congress of the United States awarded
- 23 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with the Congressional Gold
- 24 Medal; and
- 25 WHEREAS, Following the terrorist attacks on our nation on
- 26 September 11, 2001, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a
- 27 group of international religious leaders to produce the first
- 28 joint statement with Muslim leaders that condemned the 9/11
- 29 attacks as "anti-religious"; and
- 30 WHEREAS, In October 2005 the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with
- 31 Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, cosponsored the Conference
- 32 on Peace and Tolerance II to further promote peace and stability
- 33 in southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region and Central Asia via
- 34 religious leaders' interfaith dialogue, understanding and
- 35 action; and
- 36 WHEREAS, The Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for
- 37 nearly 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members
- 38 worldwide with more than 2 million members in the United States;
- 39 and
- 40 WHEREAS, Since 1453 the continuing presence of the Ecumenical
- 41 Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to the
- 42 religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and
- 43 WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because
- 44 the Government of Turkey refuses to recognize the rights and
- 45 religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is
- 46 considered a minority religion by the Turkish government; and
- 47 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited the candidates
- 48 available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only
- 49 Turkish nationals, and from the millions of Orthodox Christians
- 50 living in Turkey at the turn of the 20th century, and due to the
- 51 continued policies of minority discrimination during this period
- 52 by the Turkish government, there remain less than 3,000 of the