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
   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 268th 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. Confronted 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

1. Turkish nationals, and from the millions of Orthodox Christians
2. living in Turkey at the turn of the 20th century, and due to the
3. continued policies of minority discrimination during this period
4. by the Turkish government, there remain less than 3,000 of the
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

House Resolution

No. 876 Session of 2006

Whereas, The Government of Turkey has reneged on its agreement to reopen the Theological School on the island of Haiki, which the Turkish government closed in 1971, thus impeding training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and

Whereas, The European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 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 Turkish government's current treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union; and

Whereas, Orthodox Christians in the Commonwealth and throughout the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions of the Turkish government; and

WHEREAS, In November 2006 the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, a group of laymen who each have been honored with a Patriarchal title, or filiakion, by the Ecumenical Patriarch for their outstanding service to the Orthodox Church, will send an American delegation to Turkey to meet with Turkish government officials, as well as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regarding the Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the Government of Turkey to do all of the following:

1. Uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise
2. Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
3. Grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities
4. Respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
5. and be it further
6. RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, to the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, to the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States and to the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.

TIMOTHY J. SOLOBAY
State Representative, 48th Legislative District