President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 2005

February 16, 2012

Dear President Obama,

We write to you to express our deep concern that the policies of the Turkish government pose a serious threat to the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual home of the world’s second largest Christian Church of approximately 300 million Orthodox Christians.

Nearly ninety-four percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s properties have already been confiscated by the Turkish government.

Turkish laws and policies restrict who may be elected Ecumenical Patriarch to Turkish citizens. These threaten the Ecumenical Patriarchate with extinction in the coming years. This cannot stand. Any of the nearly 300 million non-Turkish Orthodox Christians should be able to become Ecumenical Patriarch.

Millions of Orthodox Christian Americans—including those in the state of Washington—stand to lose their spiritual head, and all Christians will give up a crucial link to their history and forefathers, for it was within this 2,000 year old Sacred See that the test of the New Testament was codified, the canonical structure of the Christian Church was established and the Nicene Creed was created.

Thirty-eight (38) religious freedom resolutions and letter in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have been adopted in thirty-two (32) legislatures in the United State, urging the Turkish government to do essentially four things:

* Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;
* Grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train its clergy;
* Respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s property rights; and
* Re-open the Halki Theological School.

We, the undersigned support these requests and share their concern for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and respectfully request that you communicate these concerns to the leaders of the Turkish government urging them to discontinue those policies which threaten the future existence of the Patriarchate.
Representative John Ahern

Representative Glenn Anderson

Representative Mike Armstrong

Representative Barbara Bailey

Representative Bruce Chandler

Representative Larry Crouse

Representative Gary Alexander

Representative Jan Angel

Representative Katrina Asay

Representative Vincent Buys

Representative Cary Condotta

Representative Cathy Dahlquist
Representative
Henry Aglietti
District 43

Representative
Fred Sim
District 35

Representative
David Guerin
District 44

Representative
B.C. Bailey
District 19

Representative
Fred DeMarco
District 47

Representative
Tim Pellet
District 17

Representative
Greg Roloff
District 46
Representative  Eileen Cody   District  34

Representative  Patti Kaj   District  32

Representative  Marie Zori Docherty   District  36

Representative  Kathy Haigh   District  35

Representative  [Signature]   District  31

Representative  [Signature]   District  22

Representative  [Signature]   District  37
Representative  Dean Takko  District  19

Representative  [Signature]  District  45

Representative  Mike Selle  District  38

Representative  [Signature]  District  1

Representative  [Signature]  District  41

Representative  [Signature]  District  

Representative  [Signature]  District  