



SR0100

LRB096 11495 EFG 21975 r

1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2

3

4

5

6

Urging the Government of Turkey to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and for other purposes.

7

8

9

10

WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul, Turkey, is the Sacred See that presides in a spirit of brotherhood over a communion of self-governing churches of the Orthodox Christian world; and

11

12

13

14

15

WHEREAS, The See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is the 269th in direct succession to the Apostle Andrew and holds titular primacy as primus inter pares, meaning "first among equals," in the community of Orthodox churches world-wide; and

16

17

18

19

20

21

WHEREAS, In 1994, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along with leaders of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, which brought together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the ethnic conflict in the Caucasus region; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1997, the Congress of the United States awarded
2 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with the Congressional Gold
3 Medal; and

4 WHEREAS, Following the terrorist attacks on our nation on
5 September 11, 2001, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered
6 a group of international religious leaders to produce the first
7 joint statement with Muslim leaders that condemned the 9/11
8 attacks as "antireligious"; and

9 WHEREAS, In October 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch, along
10 with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders, cosponsored the
11 Conference on Peace and Tolerance II to further promote peace
12 and stability in southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region, and
13 Central Asia via religious leaders' interfaith dialogue,
14 understanding, and action; and

15 WHEREAS, The Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for
16 nearly 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300,000,000 members
17 world-wide with more than 2,000,000 members in the United
18 States; and

19 WHEREAS, Since 1453, the continuing presence of the
20 Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament
21 to the religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and

1 WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because
2 the Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered a minority religion
3 by the Turkish government; and

4 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited the
5 candidates available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch
6 to only Turkish nationals, and from the millions of Orthodox
7 Christians living in Turkey at the turn of the 20th century and
8 due to the continued policies during this period by the Turkish
9 government, there remain less than 3,000 of the Ecumenical
10 Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and

11 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey closed the Theological
12 School on the island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow
13 it to reopen, thus impeding training for Orthodox Christian
14 clergy; and

15 WHEREAS, The Turkish government has confiscated nearly 94%
16 of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a
17 42% tax, retroactive to 1999, on the Baloukli Hospital and Home
18 for the Aged, a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical
19 Patriarchate; and

20 WHEREAS, The European Union, a group of nations with a
21 common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its
22 peoples, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3,

1 2005; and

2 WHEREAS, The European Union defined membership criteria
3 for accession at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993,
4 obligating candidate countries to achieve certain levels of
5 reform, including stability of institutions guaranteeing
6 democracy, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for and
7 protection of minorities and human rights; and

8 WHEREAS, The Turkish government's current treatment of the
9 Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership
10 conditions and goals of the European Union; and

11 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in this State and throughout
12 the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because
13 of the continued actions of the Turkish government; and

14 WHEREAS, The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the
15 Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, a group of laymen who each
16 have been honored with a patriarchal title, or "offikion", by
17 the Ecumenical Patriarch for their outstanding service to the
18 Orthodox Church, will send an American delegation to Turkey to
19 meet with Turkish government officials, as well as the United
20 States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regarding the
21 Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate;
22 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the members of this
3 Senate urge the Government of Turkey to: (1) uphold and
4 safeguard religious and human rights without compromise; (2)
5 cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; (3)
6 grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
7 recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train
8 clergy of all nationalities; and (4) respect the property
9 rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and be
10 it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate is authorized
12 and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution
13 to the President of the United States, the United States
14 Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the
15 Republic of Turkey to the United States, and the members of the
16 Illinois Congressional Delegation.