

**As Introduced**

**128th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2009-2010**

**H. C. R. No. 29**

**Representative Letson**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Ujvagi, Yuko, Boyd, Derickson**

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**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

To urge the Government of Turkey to respect the 1  
rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical 2  
Patriarchate. 3

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

WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul, 4  
Turkey, is the spiritual home of the world's second largest 5  
Christian church; and 6

WHEREAS, Within the two-thousand-year-old Sacred See of the 7  
Ecumenical Patriarchate, the New Testament was codified and the 8  
Nicene Creed was created; and 9

WHEREAS, The Sacred See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch 10  
Bartholomew, one of the world's preeminent spiritual leaders and 11  
peacemakers representing 300 million Orthodox Christians 12  
worldwide; and 13

WHEREAS, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has a record of 14  
reaching out and working for peace and reconciliation among all 15  
faiths and has fostered an interfaith dialogue among Christians, 16  
Jews, and Muslims; and 17

WHEREAS, Following the attacks on our nation on September 11, 18  
2001, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a group of 19

international religious leaders to produce the first joint 20  
statement with Muslim leaders that condemned these attacks as 21  
"anti-religious"; and 22

WHEREAS, The Ecumenical Patriarchate co-sponsored the 23  
Conference on Peace and Tolerance in Istanbul, which issued the 24  
Bosporus Declaration that stated that "A crime committed in the 25  
name of religion is a crime against religion"; and 26

WHEREAS, Since 1453 the continuing presence of the Ecumenical 27  
Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to religious 28  
coexistence; and 29

WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because 30  
the Government of Turkey refuses to recognize the rights and 31  
religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and 32

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has failed to recognize the 33  
Ecumenical Patriarchate's international status; and 34

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited to Turkish 35  
nationals the candidates available to hold the office of 36  
Ecumenical Patriarch; and 37

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has confiscated 75% of the 38  
Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42% 39  
retroactive tax on the Balukli Hospital of Istanbul, which is 40  
operated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and 41

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has reneged on its 42  
agreement to reopen the Theological School at Halki, which the 43  
Government of Turkey closed in 1971, thus impeding training for 44  
the Orthodox clergy in Turkey; and 45

WHEREAS, The European Union, a group of nations with a common 46  
goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, has 47  
agreed to open accession negotiations with Turkey; and 48

WHEREAS, Under the terms of the draft European Union 49

Constitution, current and prospective member nations should have 50  
the goal of eliminating discrimination based upon grounds such as 51  
sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, 52  
language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, 53  
national minority membership, property, birth, disability, age, or 54  
sexual orientation; and 55

WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey's current treatment of the 56  
Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership 57  
conditions and goals of the European Union; and 58

WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in this state and throughout the 59  
United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the 60  
continued actions of the Government of Turkey; now therefore be it 61

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the 128th General Assembly 62  
of the State of Ohio, in adopting this resolution, urge the 63  
Government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human 64  
rights without compromise, grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate 65  
appropriate international recognition and ecclesiastic succession, 66  
grant the Ecumenical Patriarch the right to train clergy of all 67  
nationalities, and respect the property and human rights of the 68  
Ecumenical Patriarchate; and be it further 69

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to 70  
the President of the United States, the United States Ambassador 71  
to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the Republic of 72  
Turkey to the United States, and the Ohio Congressional 73  
delegation. 74