

**As Reported by the House Policy and Legislative Oversight
Committee**

**130th General Assembly
Regular Session
2013-2014**

H. C. R. No. 56

**Representative Letson
Cosponsor: Representative Thompson**

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

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

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

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, in adopting this resolution, urge the Government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise, grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate appropriate international recognition and ecclesiastic succession, grant the Ecumenical Patriarch the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and respect the property and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and be it further

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