

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Ohio (the House of Representatives concurring):

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Following the attacks on our nation on September 11, 2001, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a group of international religious leaders to produce the first joint statement with Muslim leaders that condemned these attacks as "anti-religious"; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Adopted _____, 20____