



HR0666

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

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

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

16 WHEREAS, In 1994, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along
17 with leaders of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation,
18 cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, which
19 brought together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious
20 leaders for an interfaith dialogue to help end the Balkan
21 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 the members of this House urge the Government of Turkey to: (1)
4 uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without
5 compromise; (2) cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical
6 Patriarchate; (3) grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate
7 international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the
8 right to train clergy of all nationalities; and (4) respect the
9 property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical
10 Patriarchate; and be it further

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