

Enrolled
Senate Joint Resolution 16

Sponsored by Senators MONROE, STARR, DEVLIN

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

Whereas the See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is the 270th 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 worldwide; and

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

Whereas in 1997, the Congress of the United States awarded Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with the Congressional Gold Medal; and

Whereas following the terrorist 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 the 9/11 attacks as “antireligious”; and

Whereas in October 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance II to further promote peace and stability in southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region and Central Asia via religious leaders’ interfaith dialogue, understanding, and action; and

Whereas the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members worldwide with more than 2 million members in the United States; and

Whereas since 1453, the continuous presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul has been a living testament to the religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and

Whereas this religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered by the government of the Republic of Turkey to be the head of the Greek minority in Istanbul exclusively, rather than the head of the Greek Orthodox Church; and

Whereas the Turkish government has limited the candidates available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish nationals, and there remain fewer than 2,000 Orthodox Christians living in Turkey today; and

Whereas the Turkish government closed the Orthodox Christian theological school on the island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to reopen, thus impeding training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and

Whereas the Turkish government does not recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a legal entity, and is therefore confiscating all of its properties along with the majority of the property belonging to the Greek community and its parishes, and imposing high taxes on the Balouki Hospital and Home for the Aged, a charity hospital; and

Whereas the European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples, began accession negotiations with the Republic of Turkey on October 3, 2005; and

Whereas the European Union defined membership criteria for accession at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to achieve certain levels of reform, in-

cluding stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law and respect for and protection of minorities, human rights and religious rights; and

Whereas the Turkish government's current treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union; and

Whereas Orthodox Christians in Oregon and throughout the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the deliberate actions of the Turkish government; and

Whereas the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, a group of laymen who each have been honored with a patriarchal title, or "offikion," by the Ecumenical Patriarch for their outstanding service to the Orthodox Christian Church, will send an American delegation to Turkey to meet with Turkish government officials, as well as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regarding the Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Seventy-fifth Legislative Assembly, support the efforts of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to promote the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims and respectfully request that the Republic of Turkey uphold and safeguard religious and human rights and grant to the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate rights and independence to carry on the work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in perpetuity.

Adopted by Senate May 6, 2009

Secretary of Senate

President of Senate

Adopted by House June 1, 2009

Speaker of House