

House Concurrent Resolution 26

Sponsored by Representative PRUSAK, Senator WAGNER

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Declares support for freedom and human rights in Turkey.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1
2 Whereas the State of Oregon values the longstanding alliance between the United States and
3 the Republic of Turkey; and

4 Whereas the people of Oregon value their friendship with the people of Turkey and seek to
5 promote their democratic aspirations; and

6 Whereas Turkey is a constitutional, secular state with an ethnically, religiously and culturally
7 diverse population; and

8 Whereas Turkey has been a modern democracy and a major North Atlantic Treaty Organization
9 ally to the United States; and

10 Whereas Turkey is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and
11 is therefore obligated to uphold the freedom of its people to peacefully express criticism of their
12 government; and

13 Whereas actions taken by the Government of Turkey in the aftermath of the attempted coup of
14 July 2016 have significantly expanded the government's crackdown on freedoms of expression,
15 peaceful assembly and association; and

16 Whereas Freedom House assessed Turkey as "not free" in its Freedom in the World 2020 report;
17 and

18 Whereas since July 2016, Turkish authorities have detained tens of thousands of people they
19 accuse of aiding the coup attempt or being affiliated with a militant group, sweeping up journalists,
20 opposition politicians, dissidents and others; and

21 Whereas a two-year state of emergency restricted the exercise of fundamental freedoms, and
22 laws and decrees then codified some provisions from the state of emergency; and

23 Whereas Turkey remains the world's worst jailer of journalists, according to the Committee to
24 Protect Journalists; and

25 Whereas fair trial rights and protections for lawyers have been restricted in Turkey just as they
26 are most critically needed, given mass detentions and the wider crackdown on dissent; and

27 Whereas immediately following the incursion by the Turkish Armed Forces into northeastern
28 Syria on October 9, 2019, the Government of Turkey began a coordinated crackdown on online dis-
29 sent; and

30 Whereas Turkey heavily restricts and censors the Internet, and the government has blocked
31 more than 200,000 websites and social media platforms, including Twitter, YouTube and Wikipedia;
32 and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 Whereas Turkey has pressured Netflix and other online streaming platforms to censor content
2 according to rules set by the Radio and Television Supreme Council; and

3 Whereas Turkey ranks among the countries with the highest number of content removal re-
4 quests sent to Twitter and Facebook, according to the companies' transparency reports; and

5 Whereas human rights violations have been a defining aspect of President Recep Tayyip
6 Erdogan's authoritarian rule; and

7 Whereas blanket bans on peaceful protests of any form have been implemented by local gover-
8 nors across Turkey; and

9 Whereas these bans have resulted in the arrest and detention of many people and represent
10 clear violations of the right to peaceful assembly as protected by international human rights con-
11 ventions to which Turkey is a party and by the Constitution of Turkey; now, therefore,

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

13 That we, the members of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly, declare our support for freedom
14 and human rights in Turkey; and be it further

15 Resolved, That we call on the Government of Turkey to:

16 (1) Immediately lift restrictions on freedom of expression, including expression online or in so-
17 cial media;

18 (2) Ensure that criticism of the Turkish Armed Forces' military operations or calling for peace
19 through media, social media, peaceful assembly or other peaceful means is not criminalized;

20 (3) Drop all charges and end prosecution of individuals or groups for peaceful expression of their
21 opposition to Turkey's military operations in Syria;

22 (4) Ensure that people in Turkey can gather and protest peacefully, including by lifting blanket
23 protest bans across the country;

24 (5) Release all political prisoners, including journalists; and

25 (6) Respect the rights of Turkish citizens to elect their leaders through a democratic process.