

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1835

By Senators Owens, Donovan, Emler, Faust-Goudeau, Haley, Hensley, Kelly, Kelsey, Kultala, Lee, McGinn, Ostmeyer, Pilcher-Cook, Reitz, D. Schmidt, Schodorf, Umbarger and Vratil

2-27

11 A RESOLUTION urging the Government of Turkey to uphold and safe-
12 guard religious and human rights without compromise; cease its dis-
13 crimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; grant the Ecumenical Pa-
14 triarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession
15 and the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and respect the property
16 rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

17
18 WHEREAS, The Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly
19 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members world-wide
20 with more than 2 million members in the United States; and

21 WHEREAS, Since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical
22 Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to the religious coex-
23 istence of Christians and Muslims; and

24 WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the Ec-
25 umenical Patriarchate is considered a minority religion by the Turkish
26 government; and

27 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited the candidates
28 available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish na-
29 tionals and from the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at
30 the turn of the 20th century and due to the continued policies during this
31 period by the Turkish government, there remain less than 3,000 of the
32 Ecumenical Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and

33 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey closed the Theological School
34 on the island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to reopen, thus
35 impeding training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and

36 WHEREAS, The Turkish government has confiscated nearly 94 per-
37 cent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42%
38 tax, retroactive to 1999, on the Baloukli Hospital and Home for the Aged,
39 a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

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

43 WHEREAS, The European Union defined membership criteria for

1 accession at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating can-
2 didate countries to achieve certain levels of reform, including stability of
3 institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law and
4 respect for and protection of minorities and human rights; and

5 WHEREAS, The Turkish government's current treatment of the Ec-
6 cumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and
7 goals of the European Union; and

8 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in Kansas and throughout the United
9 States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions
10 of the Turkish government; and

11 WHEREAS, The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order
12 of St. Andrew the Apostle, a group of laymen who each have been hon-
13 ored with a patriarchal title, or "offikion", by the Ecumenical Patriarch
14 for their outstanding service to the Orthodox Church, will send an Amer-
15 ican delegation to Turkey to meet with Turkish government officials, as
16 well as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, regard-
17 ing the Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate:
18 Now, therefore,

19 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we urge the
20 Government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human
21 rights without compromise; cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical
22 Patriarchate; grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
23 recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to train clergy of all
24 nationalities; and respect the property rights and human rights of the
25 Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

26 *Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate is directed to
27 provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United
28 States, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the
29 Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States and to the
30 members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation.