

Senate Resolution No. 1807

Senator Owens

1-19

1 A RESOLUTION urging the Government of Turkey to uphold and
2 safeguard religious and human rights without compromise; ease its
3 discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; grant the Ecumenical
4 Patriarch appropriate international recognition; ecclesiastic
5 succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and
6 respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical
7 Patriarchate.
8 WHEREAS, The Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly
9 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members worldwide
10 with more than 2 million members in the United States; and
11 WHEREAS, Since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical
12 Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to the religious
13 coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and
14 WHEREAS, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the
15 Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered a minority religion by the
16 Turkish government; and
17 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey has limited the candidates
18 available to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish
19 nationals and from the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey
20 at the turn of the 20th century and due to the continued policies during
21 this period by the Turkish government, there remain less than 3,000 of
22 the Ecumenical Patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and
23 WHEREAS, The Government of Turkey closed the Theological
24 School on the island of Halki in 1971 and has refused to allow it to
25 reopen, thus impeding training for Orthodox Christian clergy; and
26 WHEREAS, The Turkish government has confiscated nearly 94% of
27 the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42% tax,
28 retroactive to 1999, on the Baloukli Hospital and Home for the Aged, a
29 charity hospital run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and
30 WHEREAS, The European Union, a group of nations with a
31 common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its peoples,
32 began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005; and
33 WHEREAS, The European Union defined membership criteria for

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

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

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

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

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

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