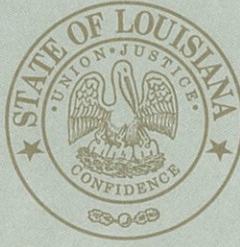


Louisiana Senate



Regular Session, 2007

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 109

BY SENATOR MURRAY

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the government of Turkey to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

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 269th 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 world-wide; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the Congress of the United States awarded the 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, the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members world-wide with more than 2 million members in the United States; and

WHEREAS, since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey 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 a minority religion by the Turkish government; and

WHEREAS, the government of Turkey closed the 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 has confiscated nearly 94 percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties and has placed a 42 percent tax, retroactive to 1999, on the Balouki Hospital and Home for the Aged, a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; and

WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in this state and throughout the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader because of the continued actions of the Turkish government; and

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge the government of Turkey to:

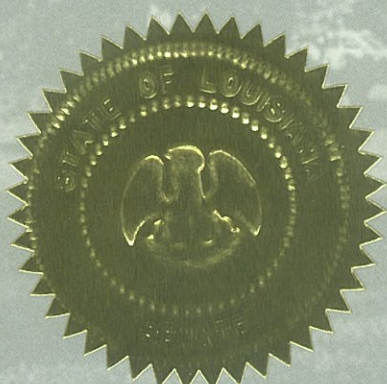
(1) Uphold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise.

(2) Cease its discrimination of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

(3) Grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities.

(4) Respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the governor, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States, and to the members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation.



Donald E. Hines

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE