

A MEMORIAL

ENCOURAGING THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM; URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC 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 PATRIARCH.

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 two hundred sixty-ninth in direct succession to the Apostle Andrew and holds titular primacy as primus inter pares, meaning "first among equals", in the community of orthodox Christian 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 the United States 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 September 11 attacks as "anti religious"; 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 two thousand years, numbers approximately three hundred million members worldwide with more than two 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, the government of Turkey has limited the candidates available to hold the office of ecumenical patriarch to only Turkish nationals, and there remain fewer than three thousand of the ecumenical patriarch's flock left in Turkey today; and

WHEREAS, the theological school on the island of Halki

was closed in 1971, thus impeding training for orthodox Christian clergy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the government of the republic of Turkey be urged to hold and safeguard religious and human rights without compromise; grant the ecumenical patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastic succession and the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the president of the United States, the majority leader of the United States senate, the speaker of the United States house of representatives, the United States ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, the ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States and to members of New Mexico's congressional delegation.