

State of South Dakota

EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2012

457T0284

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Introduced by: Senators Heineman, Adelstein, Buhl, Cutler, Haverly, Johnston, Kraus, Krebs, Novstrup (Al), Peters, Rampelberg, and Schlekeway and Representatives Gosch, Abdallah, Blake, Bolin, Boomgarden, Brunner, Carson, Conzet, Deelstra, Dryden, Feinstein, Gibson, Haggar, Hansen (Jon), Hawley, Hickey, Hubbel, Hunt, Jensen, Kirkeby, Kopp, Liss, Lust, Magstadt, Olson (Betty), Romkema, Rozum, Schaefer, Sly, Stricherz, Tornow, Vanneman, Verchio, Wick, and Willadsen

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Urging the government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard
2 religious and human rights and to respect the property rights and human rights of the
3 Ecumenical Patriarchate.

4 WHEREAS, the Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly two thousand years,
5 numbers approximately three hundred million members worldwide, with more than two million
6 members in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey
8 has been a living testament to the religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims; and

9 WHEREAS, this religious coexistence is in doubt because the Ecumenical Patriarchate is
10 considered a minority religion by the Turkish government; and

11 WHEREAS, there were millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at the turn of the
12 twentieth century, but there remain fewer than three thousand in Turkey today; and



1 WHEREAS, Orthodox Christians in South Dakota and throughout the United States are
2 deeply concerned about the possible loss of their spiritual leader; and

3 WHEREAS, while there have been difficulties in the past with the relationship of the
4 Orthodox Christian Church and the Turkish government, certain recent actions by the Turkish
5 government suggest an interest in improving its relationship with and treatment of the Orthodox
6 Christian Church, and such actions are acknowledged and welcomed by the Christian Orthodox
7 community; and

8 WHEREAS, the people of South Dakota desire to encourage continued dialogue and
9 communication between the leadership of the Turkish government and the Orthodox Christian
10 Church, such as recent high-level meetings between Turkish officials and the Ecumenical
11 Patriarchate; and

12 WHEREAS, many state Legislatures have already expressed similar sentiments and
13 concerns in legislative resolutions; and

14 WHEREAS, eighty-nine United States Senators, including Senator John Thune and Senator
15 Tim Johnson, recently signed a letter to President Obama declaring that the restoration of
16 religious freedom and human rights for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is in the best
17 interests of people of all faiths, including those in both America and Turkey:

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Eighty-seventh Legislature
19 of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the
20 Legislature urges the government of Turkey to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights
21 of all its citizens without exception, to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
22 recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and to
23 respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all religious and
24 faith traditions.