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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

SENATE RESOLUTION

**JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

Introduced By: Senator Leonidas P. Raptakis

Date Introduced: January 13, 2022

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, Bartholomew of Constantinople, the 270th and current Archbishop of
2 Constantinople, and the Ecumenical Patriarch since November 2, 1991, was born Dimitrios
3 Archontonis on February 29, 1940, on the Island of Imbros, which was later renamed Gokceada
4 by Turkey; and

5 WHEREAS, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew attended elementary school on his home
6 Island of Imbros and then attended secondary school at the renowned Zographeion Lyceum in
7 Constantinople (Istanbul). Shortly thereafter, he studied theology at the Patriarchal Theological
8 School of Halki, graduating in 1961 with highest honors. Upon graduation he was immediately
9 ordained a deacon and given the name Bartholomew; and

10 WHEREAS, From 1963 to 1968, Bartholomew pursued graduate studies at the Pontifical
11 Oriental Institute in Rome, the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Switzerland and the Ludwig
12 Maximilian University of Munich, Germany. Upon graduating, he returned to Constantinople and
13 was appointed Assistant Dean of the Sacred Theological School of Halki, and shortly thereafter
14 was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on October 19, 1969; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1972, Bartholomew was chosen to serve as the Director of the Patriarchal
16 Office of his predecessor patriarch Demetrios. On Christmas of 1973, he was named the
17 Metropolitan of Philadelphia, was renamed as the Director of the Patriarchal office, and remained
18 in those positions until he was enthroned as the Metropolitan of Chalcedon in 1990; and

19 WHEREAS, On October 22, 1991, in Istanbul, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was

1 unanimously elected by the Holy Synod, to be the 270th Archbishop of Constantinople,
2 Ecumenical Patriarch, and the spiritual leader of approximately 300 million Orthodox Christians
3 across the globe and many millions in the United States. The State of Rhode Island is blessed to
4 be the home of three Greek Orthodox parishes: Assumption Greek Orthodox Church,
5 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, and St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church; and

6 WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure as the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew has
7 worked tirelessly in support of religious liberty and tolerance throughout the world. He has been
8 called the “Green Patriarch” in honor and recognition of his efforts to promote ecology and in
9 support of initiatives to protect the environment, to raise personal responsibility and to promote
10 environmental ethics, by organizing numerous international ecumenical and interreligious
11 symposia, all over the globe . Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has always been a firm believer
12 and a global leader, in interfaith dialogue and thanks to his hard work, Orthodox Christian
13 relations with the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists and other Christian groups have been
14 greatly advanced. His unique perspective and experience as a citizen of Turkey has greatly
15 assisted him in his efforts to promote greater understanding and tolerance between the Muslim
16 community and the Orthodox Christian community. He strongly engaged by taking significant
17 initiatives in an international level, on defending and promoting Children's Rights and raised a
18 strong voice against Modern Slavery; and

19 WHEREAS, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s wisdom, patience, and vigorous
20 support of peaceful resolutions to world conflicts has been widely sought out and appreciated by
21 world leaders and organizations across the globe. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was invited
22 to Brussels in 1993 to meet with the President of the Commission of the European Union, and in
23 1994, he delivered a historical and inspirational talk, as an invited Church leader at the plenary
24 session of the European Union in Strasbourg. Later that year, he addressed the sixth World
25 Conference of Religions for Peace in Riva, del Garda, Italy. Ecumenical Patriarch also visited
26 Jerusalem in 1995, where he met Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, as well as Pope John Paul II
27 in Rome at the Vatican; and

28 WHEREAS, Other distinguished leaders who have consulted with the Ecumenical
29 Patriarch include then-President of France, Jacques Chirac in Lourdes, the Archbishop of
30 Canterbury in Great Britain, and the Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Shortly after September 11,
31 2001, the Ecumenical Patriarch co-chaired a major inter-faith meeting with the President of the
32 European Commission, Roman Prodi, on “The Peace of God in the World”, an event with major
33 religious leaders from Christianity, Islam and Judaism in attendance; and

34 WHEREAS, In his first visit to the United States, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

1 received the Congressional Gold Medal, in recognition of “his outstanding and enduring
2 contributions to religious understanding and peace”. In his most recent twelve-day visit to the
3 United States, the Ecumenical Patriarch visited New York City on November 2, 2021, presided
4 over a somber ceremonial door opening at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National
5 Shrine near the World Trade Center in memory of the tragedy of the terrorist attacks that took
6 place twenty years earlier on September 11, 2001, and in further memory of the small orthodox
7 parish church near ground zero that was also destroyed during the terrorist attacks. The
8 Ecumenical Patriarch also visited the White House and met with President Biden on his recent
9 trip to the United States; and

10 WHEREAS, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew received numerous awards and honors
11 throughout his distinguished life of public service including the Human Dignity Award from the
12 American Jewish Committee, the 2013 Global Thinkers Forum Award for Excellence in Peace
13 and Collaboration, the Four Freedoms Award in 2012 for the Freedom of Worship, the
14 aforementioned Congressional Gold Medal, which, along with the Presidential Medal of
15 Freedom, is one of the two highest civilian awards given by the United States, and the 2002
16 Sophie Prize for his environmental advocacy. In April of 2008, Ecumenical Patriarch
17 Bartholomew was included in Time Magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people in the
18 world; now, therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby congratulates
20 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the 30th Anniversary of his election as the Ecumenical
21 Patriarch on October 22, 1991. We thank him for his tireless efforts to promote world peace, to
22 protect the environment, to support religious tolerance and liberty, and for being the inspirational
23 leader of the world’s 300 million Orthodox Christians. We wish him many more years of good
24 health, happiness, and success as the Ecumenical Patriarch and in his many noble endeavors; and
25 be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
27 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of
28 Constantinople.

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