

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

As Engrossed: H3/12/15

HR 1042

By: Representatives D. Ferguson, G. McGill

HOUSE RESOLUTION

*TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PRESERVE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS,
FREE MEDIA, AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN TURKEY; AND
TO RECOGNIZE TURKISH-AMERICAN CITIZENS' ENDEAVORS TO
IMPROVE TIES BETWEEN THE GREAT STATE OF ARKANSAS AND
TURKEY.*

Subtitle

*TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PRESERVE
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, FREE MEDIA, AND
DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN TURKEY; AND TO
RECOGNIZE TURKISH-AMERICAN CITIZENS'
ENDEAVORS TO IMPROVE TIES BETWEEN THE
GREAT STATE OF ARKANSAS AND TURKEY.*

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

WHEREAS, Turkey is our longstanding ally, a key North Atlantic Treaty Organization member, and a strategic partner in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, a strong democracy requires both tolerance and transparency, and recent decisions by the Turkish government to intimidate and smother opposition voices are threats to the democratic principles that Turkey has previously upheld; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of President Erdogan, the Turkish government has become increasingly authoritarian as it detains journalists,



suppresses political dissidents, and completely disregards the rule of law and fundamental democratic precepts in Turkey; and

WHEREAS, Turkey has become one of the top countries for detained journalists and restricted access to social media; and

WHEREAS, the recent arrests of members of the Turkish media, media owners, and prominent journalists including Mr. Hidayet Karaca, CEO of Samanyolu Media Group, who has been jailed without any indictment since December 14, 2014, and prominent journalist Mr. Mehmet Baransu because of his investigative reports on military coup plans as recent as 2007, among many others, are alarming; and

WHEREAS, detained members of Turkish media have ties to a known critic of President Erdogan's Administration; and

WHEREAS, recent arrests have had a chilling effect on freedom, democracy, and economic prosperity for all of Turkey; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ekrem Dumanli, editor-in-chief of Zaman newspaper, was detained and released on questionable charges, and Ms. Sedef Kabas was detained and released because of her tweets criticizing antidemocratic tendencies of the Turkish government; and

WHEREAS, a free media must be supported and protected to foster an environment open to constructive political discussion and to ensure freedom of expression; and

WHEREAS, a vibrant and dedicated Turkish-American community in Arkansas has been very active and involved in cultivating and promoting strong economic, educational, and social ties for the best interests of the State of Arkansas between Turkey and the United States,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives of the Ninetieth General Assembly strongly urges the Turkish government to abandon its course of intimidation, embrace a free media, and tolerate dissenting voices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate copy be provided to United States Secretary of State John Kerry, United States Senator John Boozman, and United States Senator Tom Cotton by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.

/s/D. Ferguson