**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO MEMORIALIZE HIS EXCELLENCY RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN OF TURKEY, TO RECOGNIZE THE CLOSE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES, AND TO CALL UPON PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN TO RELEASE PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON.

Whereas, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was born in the Kasimpasa quarter of Istanbul, Turkey in 1954. He spent many years competing as a football player, reportedly drawing interest from top football clubs, before attending the Istanbul Imam Hatip School, where his interest in politics began to flourish; and

Whereas, in 1976 Erdoğan was elected as the head of the National Salvation Party’s Beyoglu Youth Branch and Istanbul Youth Branch. After the dissolution of the party in 1980, Erdoğan earned a graduate degree from Marmara University’s Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and began working as an accountant; and

Whereas, it was not long before Erdoğan returned to politics with the formation of the Welfare Party in 1983 and he was selected as the Beyoglu District head in 1984. After becoming the Istanbul Provincial head and being named to the Central Executive Board, he was tasked with improving voter turnout and is credited for the party’s success in the 1989 municipal elections; and

Whereas, after he was elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994, Erdoğan successfully tacked complex issues like the city’s water shortage and pollution, while modernizing the city’s infrastructure; and

Whereas, Erdoğan co‑founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001 and was elected to his first of three terms as Turkey’s prime minister in 2003, focusing his efforts on improving Turkey’s economic standing; and

Whereas, after reaching his term limits as prime minister, Erdoğan became the AKP’s candidate in Turkey’s first direct election for the presidency and was inaugurated on August 28, 2014; and

Whereas, Turkey and the United States have enjoyed a long history of positive diplomatic relations dating back to 1927, with Turkey serving as an important security party to the United States and a valued ally in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and

Whereas, building upon the positive relations between Turkey and the United States, the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina call upon President Erdoğan to release Pastor Andrew Brunson, an American pastor who has been detained since October 2016. Now, therefore:

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly, by this resolution, memorialize His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, recognize the close partnership between Turkey and the United States, and call upon President Erdoğan to release Pastor Andrew Brunson.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey.

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