

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER

Introduced: 2/26/14

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States government to take decisive and concrete action to require the**
2 **release of Mother Pelagia Sayaf, the orphans she cares for, and Bishops Youhanna**
3 **Ibrahim and Boulos Yazigi; and urging the United States government to condemn**
4 **violent acts of religious persecution and bring a peaceful resolution to the conflicts in**
5 **Syria.**

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 **WHEREAS** thousands of Alaskans have strong spiritual and historical bonds with the
8 people of Syria and the Holy Land; and

9 **WHEREAS** thousands of Alaskans are members of the Orthodox Christian Church, a
10 faith that has been in Alaska since 1794, and are members of the same faith as those of the
11 Orthodox Church in Syria and the Holy Land; and

12 **WHEREAS** thousands of Alaskans are Roman Catholic Christians and have been
13 called by Pope Francis in his Christmas prayer to pray for the suffering people of Syria and to
14 work toward peace; and

15 **WHEREAS** thousands of Alaskans are Protestant Christians who have a deep concern

1 for and pray for the people of Syria, as expressed in articles concerning Syria by the Voice of
2 the Martyrs, a nonprofit interdenominational Christian organization; and

3 **WHEREAS** Alaskans are saddened and outraged by the crimes against humanity in
4 Syria, including such atrocities as the murder of innocent women and children, the massacre
5 of Christians in jihadi attacks, the burning and desecration of over 90 Christian churches, the
6 kidnapping of Bishops Youhanna Ibrahim and Boulos Yazigi, the recent abduction of Mother
7 Pelagia Sayaf and the orphan children she cares for at Saint Tecla monastery, the forced
8 conversion of peaceful Syrians to Islam or death to those who do not convert, and the
9 dislocation of hundreds of thousands of Christians from their homeland; and

10 **WHEREAS** Syria has been the beloved homeland of Christian people, beginning with
11 the presence of Jesus Christ in 33 A.D., and the Christian Church in Damascus and
12 throughout Syria is expressly mentioned in the New Testament; and

13 **WHEREAS**, although many western governments and the mass media demonstrate an
14 indifference to the impending demise of Christian people in the land of the birth of
15 Christianity and the crimes against the Syrian people, Alaskans take a courageous stand for
16 peace and protection for the Syrian people against terrorism;

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
18 government to take decisive and concrete action to require the release of Mother Pelagia, the
19 orphans she cares for, and Bishops Youhanna Ibrahim and Boulos Yazigi; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
21 government to condemn violent acts of religious persecution and bring a peaceful resolution
22 to the conflicts in Syria.

23 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
24 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
25 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John F. Kerry, United States Secretary of State;
26 General Martin E. Dempsey, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Honorable Robert
27 Menendez, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable Barbara
28 Mikulski, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations; the Honorable Dave Camp,
29 Chair of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee; the Honorable Bob Corker, ranking
30 member, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and
31 the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.

- 1 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the
- 2 United States Senate.