



A SENATORIAL STATEMENT

URGING RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

WHEREAS, Pastor Andrew Brunson is an American citizen and from Black Mountain, North Carolina, who has served as a missionary and pastor in Turkey since 1993; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Brunson was detained and formally arrested following the Turkish government's imposition of a State of Emergency after a violent coup attempt in July 2016 that was rightly opposed by the United States and Turks from across the political spectrum; and

WHEREAS, during the State of Emergency, tens and thousands of citizens of Turkey and citizens of the United States were arrested on vague criminal charges based on false evidence; and

WHEREAS, the Turkish government detained Pastor Brunson in 2016 without issuing an indictment until March of 2018 and he faces a possible sentence of 35 years for being involved in a "terrorist organization," while merely being a Christian pastor and missionary in Turkey; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Brunson's next hearing is July 18, 2018, at which time he will have spent 649 days of his life away from his family in a Turkish prison on wrongful and unfair charges; and

WHEREAS, 66 bipartisan members of the United States Senate and 154 bipartisan members of the United States House of Representatives signed separate letters to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey, urging him to release Pastor Brunson; and

WHEREAS, Turkey's ongoing policy of unlawfully detaining United States citizens significantly damages economic and diplomatic cooperation and undermines the long-standing trust between our State and country rooted in NATO principles;

NOW, THEREFORE, Pastor Andrew Brunson deserves to be released from prison in Turkey and given his freedom to continue his calling as a pastor and missionary.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned certifies that the foregoing statement was read in the Senate and placed upon the Journal on the 28th day of June, 2018.