

WELCOMING HIS ALL-HOLINESS
BARTHOLOMEW I, ECUMENICAL
PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINO-
NOPLE

HON. DINA TITUS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 15, 2025

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, as a Vice Co-Chair of the Hellenic Caucus and a proud Greek-American, I rise today to welcome His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, to the United States, the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian community around the world. His All-Holiness's visit to Washington, D.C. and New York is yet another demonstration of his commitment to peace, his see, and the millions of Orthodox Christians in the United States.

Born Demetrios Arhondonis in 1940 on the island of Imvros (today, Gökçeada, Turkey), His All-Holiness Bartholomew was elected in October 1991 as the 270th Archbishop of the 2000-year-old Church founded by the Apostle Andrew. His formal office is Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, a historic title dating to the sixth century. The Ecumenical Patriarch received his elementary and secondary education in Imvros and Istanbul. After completing undergraduate studies at the historic Theological School of Halki, he pursued graduate studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute of the Gregorian University in Rome (Italy), the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (Switzerland), and the University of Munich (Germany). His doctoral dissertation, submitted to the University of Athens (Greece), was in the field of Canon Law, and he was a founding member of the Society of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches. Ordained to the Diaconate in 1961 and to the Priesthood in 1969, he served as Assistant Dean at the Theological School of Halki (1968 to 1972) before his appointment as Personal Secretary to the late Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios (1972 to 1990) as well as his election as Metropolitan of Philadelphia (1973) and, subsequently, Metropolitan of Chalcedon (1990).

His see, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, once possessed holdings as vast as the Vatican but has been reduced to a small, besieged enclave in a decaying corner of Istanbul called the Phanar (Lighthouse). Almost all of its property has been seized by successive Turkish governments, its schools have been closed, and its prelates are taunted by extremists who demonstrate almost daily outside the Patriarchate, calling for its ouster from Turkey. The Patriarch himself is often jeered and threatened when he ventures outside his walled enclave. He is periodically burned in effigy by Turkish chauvinists. Petty bureaucrats take pleasure in harassing him, summoning him to their offices to question him about irrelevant issues, blocking his efforts to make repairs in the few buildings still under his control, and issuing veiled threats about what he says and does when he travels abroad. The Turkish government as a whole follows a policy that deliberately belittles him, refusing to recognize his ecumenical status as the spiritual leader of a major religious faith.

In September 1955, when Bartholomew was studying in Istanbul, he witnessed a massive pogrom against the city's Greek neighbor-

hoods that left them looking "like the bombed parts of London during the Second World War," as one British journalist reported. While the police "stood idly by or cheered on the mob," according to a report of the U.S. consul, 4,000 Greek shops and 2,000 homes were sacked and plundered, 38 churches were burned to the ground and 35 more desecrated, and 52 schools were destroyed. More than a dozen people were killed and scores were injured during the riots, beginning a cycle of violence and intimidation that has seen Istanbul's Greek population reduced from 200,000 when the riots erupted to less than 2,000 today.

At a time when hostility and misunderstanding between the Christian and Muslim worlds have reached a deadly standoff, Patriarch Bartholomew, who speaks seven languages including Turkish, has made a deliberate effort to reach out to Muslims throughout the Middle East. "It is our strong belief that Orthodox Christians have a special responsibility to assist East-West rapprochement," he noted. "For, like the Turkish Republic, we have a foot in both worlds." Pointing out that Orthodox Christians have a 550-year history of co-existence with Muslims in the Middle East, he has initiated a series of meetings with Muslim leaders throughout the region in what he calls "a dialogue of loving truth." To strengthen that dialogue, he has traveled to Libya, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Qatar, and Bahrain, and met political and religious figures in those countries, whom no other Christian hierarch has ever visited. As a result, the Patriarch has created more bridges between Christianity and Islam than any other prominent Christian leader.

The Patriarch's concerns are not just limited to interfaith conflicts but have expanded to embrace all of God's creation. He has shown such concern for the environment that he has become widely known as "the Green Patriarch." He famously declared shortly after he assumed the ecumenical throne in 1991 that "crime against the natural world is a sin." Human beings and the environment, he stated, "compose a seamless garment of existence, a multicolored cloth, which we believe to be woven in its entirety by God." The world, he told a 1997 conference of environmentalists in Santa Barbara, California, "is not ours to use for our own convenience. It is God's gift of love to us, and we must return his love by protecting it and all that is in it."

To back up his words with action, Bartholomew launched a series of initiatives to raise worldwide concern for the environment. In 1992 he proposed to all Orthodox churches that September 1st be celebrated as a special day of prayer for the environment. In 1995 he started a series of environmental conferences, inviting prominent scientists, political leaders, theologians, ecologists, and journalists to embark on weeklong trips to examine the destruction that pollution has caused on major waters. Designed to draw international attention to the ecological degradation of the areas they visit, five such floating conferences have taken place in the past decade to the Black Sea, the Aegean, the Adriatic, the Baltic and the Danube River. For his work to combat pollution, the Patriarch was chosen in 2002 to receive Norway's Sophie Prize, the most important international award given for leadership on the environment. He donated the \$100,000 prize money to the poor children of Ethiopia,

Greece, and Turkey. "We are losing time," Bartholomew warned while accepting the award, "and the more we wait, the more difficult and irreparable the damage."

Although his efforts have brought him little relief from his problems in Turkey, they have been recognized around the world, including by the U.S. Congress, which gave him its highest award, the Congressional Gold Medal, in a ceremony in the Capitol. "The greatest lesson about America lies under this magnificent dome," he told the assembled legislators. "The Pentagon embodies might, but the Capitol embodies right. In these halls, different points of view meet and are reconciled . . . And—most important to the Orthodox Church during many dark ages—in these halls human rights are preserved and human dignity is enhanced."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is a leading figure in the dialogues of the Abrahamic Faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and his presence in Washington, D.C. is an extraordinary opportunity to highlight the positive role that religious leaders of his stature bring to the myriad causes we in Congress grapple with each day.

In addition to welcoming His All-Holiness to the United States and recognizing his lifetime of service and commitment to peace, I also ask that the House join me in congratulating Patriarch Bartholomew for receiving this year's Templeton Prize. Established in 1972, the Templeton Prize honors individuals whose exemplary achievements advance Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision: harnessing the power of the sciences to explore the deepest questions of the universe and humankind's place and purpose within it. At this year's ceremony, His All-Holiness will be honored for "pioneering efforts to bridge scientific and spiritual understandings of humanity's relationship with the natural world [which] have brought together people of different faiths to heed a call for stewardship of creation."

It is my hope that His All-Holiness's trip is not only a resounding success, but brings with it a message for all of us as legislators to recommit ourselves to complementing his vital work of building bridges, protecting God's creation, and advancing the cause of peace around the world.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, September 16, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

SEPTEMBER 17

9:15 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Thomas DiNanno, of Florida, to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Michael DeSombre, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary (East Asian and Pacific Affairs), Jacob Helberg, of Florida, to be an Under Secretary (Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment), Benjamin Black, of New York, to be Chief Executive Officer of the United States International Development Finance Corporation, Paul Kapur, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, Nicole McGraw, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia, Somers Farkas, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malta, Kenneth Howery, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, Chris Pratt, of Utah, to be an Assistant Secretary (Political-Military Affairs), Stacey Feinberg, of California, to be Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Leandro Rizzuto, of Florida, to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador, Howard Brodie, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, Arthur Fisher, of North Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Austria, Nicholas Merrick, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Roman Pipko, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore, Thomas Rose, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Poland, Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, with the rank of Ambassador, Sarah Rogers, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Caleb Orr, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary (Economic and Business Affairs), Michael G. Waltz, of Florida, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the Rank of Ambassador, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Richard Buchan III, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, John Giordano, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, Michel Issa, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic, Sean O'Neill, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, Julie Stuftt, of Ohio, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan, Bill Bazzi, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia, Melinda

Hildebrand, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Costa Rica, Todd Wilcox, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary (Diplomatic Security), Riley Barnes, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Dan Negrea, of Connecticut, to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and William White, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium, all of the Department of State.

S-116

9:50 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Jeffrey Hall, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; to be immediately followed by oversight hearings to examine the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

SD-562

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Neil Jacobs, of North Carolina, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; to be immediately followed by hearings to examine the nominations of Michael Graham, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, Ethan Klein, of New Jersey, to be an Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Joyce Meyer, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs.

SR-253

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine reviewing recent events at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and implications for children's health.

SD-430

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine certain pending nominations.

SD-G50

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration

To hold hearings to examine missing unaccompanied alien children and criminal sponsors.

SD-226

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine conspiracy theories, antisemitism, and democratic decline.

2358C-RHOB

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act successes and opportunities at the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service.

SD-628

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine using the 504 program to build America's manufacturing future.

SR-428A

3 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

3:30 p.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine drug safety, supply chains, and the risk to aging Americans.

SH-216

4 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine strengthening services for veterans with spinal cord injury and disorder.

SD-106

SEPTEMBER 18

9 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, "Free Speech Protection and Reforming Expiring Authorities", an original bill entitled, "Safer Counter-Drone Authorities", S. 1221, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, S. 2283, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Oklahoma Avenue in Guthrie, Oklahoma, as the "Oscar J. Upham Post Office", and S. 252, to increase access to agency guidance documents.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Platte Moring, of South Carolina, to be Inspector General, Kirsten Davies, of Tennessee, to be Chief Information Officer, James Mazol, of Virginia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary, and Derrick Anderson, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Defense.

SD-G50

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the state of K-12 education.

SD-430

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Jennifer Lee Mascott, of Delaware, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Robert P. Chamberlin, and James D. Maxwell II, both to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Mississippi, Edmund G. LaCour, Jr., and Harold D. Mooty III, both to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, Bill Lewis, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama, David Courcelle, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana for the term of four years, and Scott Leary, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi for the term of four years.

SH-216