

## Rothman Helps Secure \$ 83.75 Million In U.S. Aid for Armenia

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Uses Position on House Appropriations Subcommittee On Foreign Operations

To Obtain Funds; \$19 Million More for Armenia Than Bush Administration Requested

Washington, DC -- Using his seat on the powerful House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) helped secure \$83.75 million in assistance to Armenia, overturning the drastic cut in aid to Armenia proposed by President Bush in his budget request to Congress earlier this year. The funds, which include \$75 million in economic assistance, \$8 million in military assistance and \$750,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET), are part of Congress' final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2005.

The measure also directs that \$3 million of the economic aid package to Armenia should be used to fund development projects in Nagorno-Karabagh. The aid measure passed the full U.S. House of Representatives and Senate on November 20 and next moves to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law.

"I am so pleased that we were able to get this assistance package for Armenia, which is \$19 million more than the Bush Administration proposed," Rothman said. "I will continue to fight to ensure that Armenia is provided with the military and economic aid to secure its people and to provide them with a sufficient standard of living in the face of the ongoing Turkish and Azerbaijani blockades."

Initially, of all the former Soviet Republics, Armenia was to sustain the largest percentage decrease in U.S. assistance as outlined in the Bush Administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2005. The Administration called for only \$62 million in economic assistance and \$2.75 million in military assistance. Rothman and his colleagues fought and successfully raised that to a total of \$83.75 million. This marks the third year in a row that the Bush Administration has attempted to cut foreign aid to Armenia and Rothman and his colleagues have successfully restored sufficient funds to Armenia's assistance package.

"Armenia, as an emerging democracy with a developing free market economic system, needs continued U.S. assistance to accomplish its objectives: regional peace and stability, a successful transition to a free market economy and a flourishing democracy," Rothman stated. "I will continue to work with the Administration to push Azerbaijan and Turkey to lift their blockades against Armenia, which are placing oppressive and unjustifiable obstacles in the path of Armenia's continued growth and development."

Rothman is an active member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, an organization that focuses on issues related to Armenia and Armenian-Americans.

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