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December 8, 2003

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Uses Position on House Appropriations Subcommittee On Foreign Operations

To Obtain \$6 Million More Than Bush Administration Requested

Washington, DC - Using his seat on the powerful House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) helped secure \$13.5 million in economic aid to Cyprus, overcoming the 50 percent cut in aid President Bush called for in his budget request to Congress earlier this year. The funds are part of the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2004, which Rothman and the full House of Representatives approved today.

"I am pleased we were able to successfully overcome the President's proposed drastic cuts so that we could provide \$13.5 million in aid for Cyprus, \$6 million more than the Bush Administration request," Rothman said. "While \$13.5 million is a significant level of aid, it is still \$1.5 million less than Cyprus received last year. I still believe that now is the wrong time to be cutting aid to Cyprus and I will continue to push for increased aid to Cyprus in the future."

In President Bush's Fiscal Year 2004 budget request submitted to Congress earlier this year, only \$7.5 million was included for Cyprus. That figure is down from \$15 million in Fiscal Year 2003 and previous years. The House was able to restore that amount to \$12 million and the Senate to \$15 million in their respective Foreign Operations appropriations bills. As a Member of the conference committee between the House and the Senate, which reconciled the differences between the two bills, Rothman fought to increase aid to its final amount of \$13.5 million.

"At a critical juncture as Cyprus readies to join the European Union, combined with the continuing refusal on the part of Turkish Cypriot Leader Rauf Denktash to negotiate for a just settlement to the conflict, the United States must continue to provide sufficient aid to Cyprus instead of decreasing assistance," Rothman said. "The Bush Administration's effort to cut funding for Cyprus was a poor and short-sighted judgment that could have negatively affected an important international peace initiative. U.S. assistance for Cyprus promotes peace and confidence through education and bi-communal projects - essential for the success of any peace plan."

Rothman is a member of the bipartisan Congressional Hellenic Caucus, which focuses attention on issues of concern to Greek Americans, specifically regarding U.S. relations with Greece and Cyprus.

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