

Rothman Votes to Normalize U.S. Trade Relations with Ukraine

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Contacts: Kimberly Allen, (202) 226-8364 and Donna Purnell, (973) 733-6368
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(Washington, DC)- Last week, Representative Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted to help Ukraine by repealing a Soviet-era trade restriction referred to as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. The bill, H.R. 1053, would grant permanent normal trade relations to Ukraine. The measure passed the House on March 8, proceeding to the Senate where it passed the next day, and currently awaits President George Bush's signature.

"I believe it is America's responsibility to partner economically with Ukraine so that a budding democracy does not fall prey to poverty and isolation," said Rothman.

Once normal trade relations are established, Ukraine will be eligible for membership in World Trade Organization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United Nations. Establishing normal trade relations with the United States is an important step on Ukraine's path to international recognition as a peaceful, democratic nation. American confidence in the country's future grew after the 2004 Presidential election in which thousands of peaceful protesters grabbed the world's attention by launching the Orange Revolution. They forced a fair election, with current President Viktor Yushchenko ultimately declared the victor by a court of law -- not violence, as some expected.

"I was proud to cast my vote in Congress to support reformers in Ukraine last week and I will continue to support legislation that improves the quality of life for Ukrainians and helps secure a brighter future for their country," added Rothman.

Rothman is a member of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus and, through his position as a Member of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations on the House Appropriations Committee, has helped secure more than \$600 million in economic assistance for Ukraine since 2001.

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