

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 12, 2013

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan:
Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey
c/o Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
2525 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Prime Minister Erdoğan:

As members of the United States Congress who are committed to the long-standing alliance between the United States and Turkey, we write to express our grave disappointment with the statement you made at the United Nations-sponsored conference in Vienna last month equating Zionism – the foundation of the Jewish state and the movement for Jewish self-determination – with fascism and anti-Semitism, and labeling it a “crime against humanity.”

We are keenly aware of the growing global threat of extremism, which imperils the security and well-being of minority groups around the world and poses an existential threat to the advancement of democratic values and political stability. To equate Zionism, a non-discriminatory affirmation of Jewish nationhood, with such dangers misapprehends and disparages a noble historical enterprise. We hope that you will take the earliest opportunity to retract your regrettable comment.

The United States has not forgotten how a centuries-old legacy of tolerance led to Turkey being the first Muslim-majority country to recognize the State of Israel in 1949. Your nation led the region, and much of the world, in acknowledging the right of the Jewish people to live in peace and security in its national homeland.

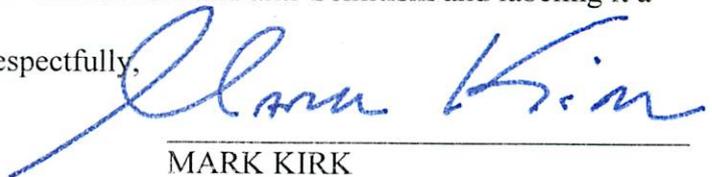
The relationship between Turkey and Israel has historically been strong, and mutually advantageous. Although strained on the political level in recent years, economic interaction remains robust; trade between the two nations reached \$4.44 billion in 2011, and initial figures for 2012 showed sharp increases from previous years. We greatly regret the harsh tone adopted by you and senior Turkish officials toward Israel in the recent past – culminating in the appalling comment included in your remarks at the Alliance of Civilizations forum. In the interests of both Turkey and Israel, and for the security and stability of the broader region, we await the restoration of this important relationship.

Based on our country’s long engagement with Turkey, and Turkey’s significant roles in NATO and the U.N., we know that your Government shares a commitment to meaningful international involvement to advance security and peace. In that spirit, we look forward to the retraction of your comment equating Zionism with fascism and anti-Semitism and labeling it a “crime against humanity.”



STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress

Respectfully,



MARK KIRK
United States Senator



DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



BILL NELSON
United States Senator

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KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



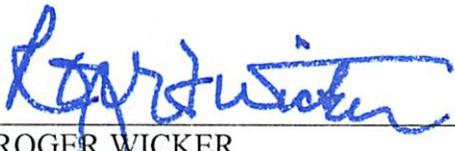
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ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
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BEN CARDIN
United States Senator



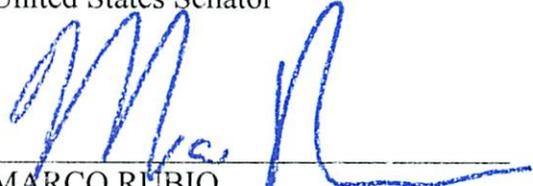
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SUSAN COLLINS
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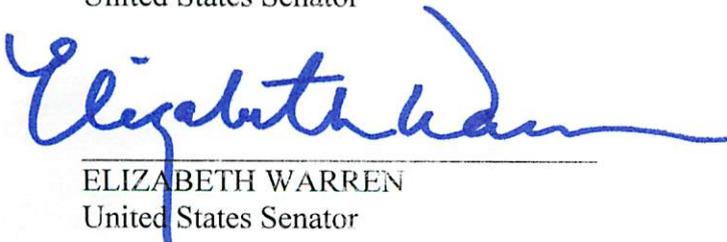
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AL FRANKEN
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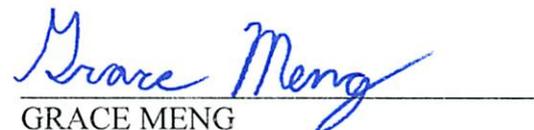

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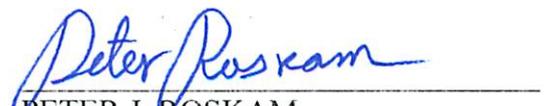

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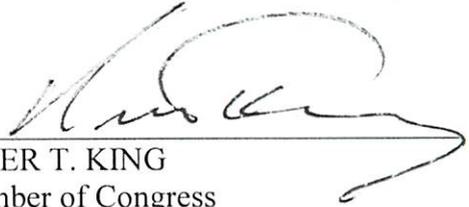
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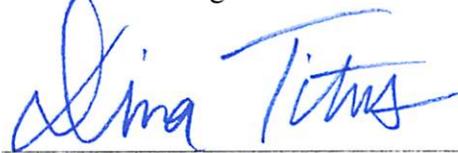
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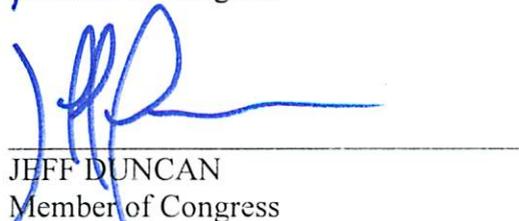
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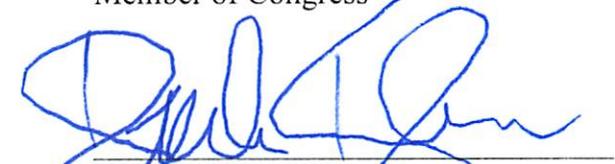
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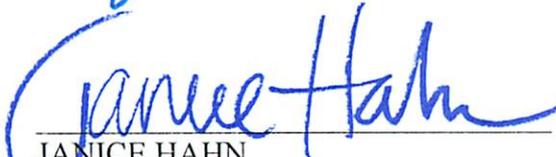

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Member of Congress

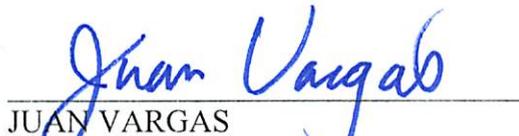

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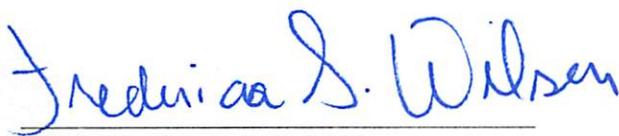

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Member of Congress

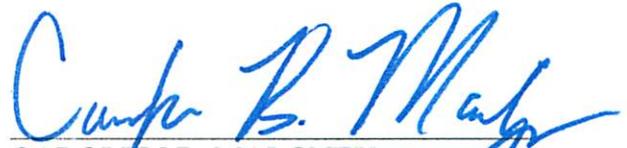

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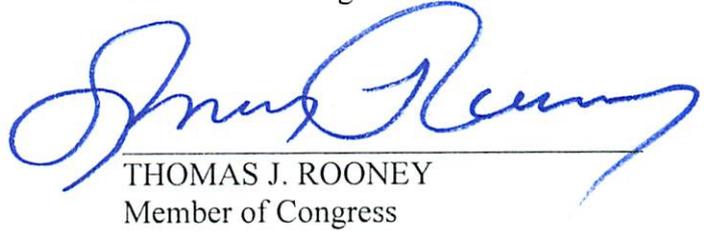

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