

**10TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS ON
U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS AND
TURKISH AMERICANS**

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX
OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2011

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans of which I am proud to serve as Co-Chair with Congressmen *Ed Whitfield*, *Steve Cohen* and *Gerry Connolly*.

The Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans, otherwise known as the Turkish Caucus, was established nearly a decade ago by Representatives *Whitfield*, *Kay Granger*, and Robert Wexler to provide a platform for members of Congress to foster dialogue with our staunch ally, the Republic of Turkey, and in recognition of the valuable contributions made by Americans of Turkish descent to our society.

The Turkish Caucus and the Turkish Coalition of America, an educational organization serving to advance understanding on U.S.-Turkish issues, will be celebrating this important milestone today with a “Turkish Caucus Day.”

The Turkish Caucus, established by two dozen members a decade ago, has grown into a formidable bipartisan caucus. In the last Congress, over a quarter of the total membership of the House had joined the Turkish Caucus. Today, in the 112th Congress, it has 106 members.

The important friendship between the United States and Turkey has proven enormously important since the beginning of the Cold War and has only grown in importance since its end. Time and time again, the Republic of Turkey has stood firmly with the United States as we have pursued our shared goals in a region where we have few steady allies. Turkey, a fellow NATO country, is a vital partner and an example of a vibrant democracy in a region burdened with inequality. The country's importance has further increased over the past few months as the region is undergoing revolutionary changes.

The Turkish Caucus has become an effective platform to foster increased contacts and activities between different groups of Americans and Turkish citizens. These include meetings with our counterparts in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which established a corresponding Turkish-U.S. Friendship Group as well as substantially increased meetings of both public and private representatives of Turkey with their American counterparts as well as with Turkish Americans. Members of the Turkish Caucus have played a leadership role in adding the voice of Congress to crucial matters related to U.S.-Turkey relations and our vital interests in the region.

Turkish Americans deserve a special thank-you for their role in expanding the membership as well as the vibrancy of the Turkish Caucus over the years. The recognition of the Caucus as a symbol of Congress' appreciation of our alliance and partnership with the Turkish nation by Turkish Americans has contributed to the rapid growth of the Caucus. On the occasion of Turkish Caucus Day, I salute Turkish Americans across the nation and thank them for their outstanding contributions to America and to strengthening the U.S.-Turkey partnership.

Our world is facing formerly unseen, monumental challenges. There is no doubt that now, more than ever, we need a strong U.S.-Turkey relationship that embodies democratic values, pluralism, secularism and respect for human rights. This kind of transnational relationship carries peace and prosperity dividends not only for the American and Turkish people, but also for the entire world.

With these thoughts, I invite my fellow members to join the Turkish Caucus on the occasion of "Turkish Caucus Day" and join us in this celebration.