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Uses Position on House Appropriations Subcommittee On Foreign Operations

To Obtain \$20.5 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 \$78.4 million in assistance to Armenia, overturning the drastic cut in aid proposed by President Bush in his budget request to Congress earlier this year. The funds, which include \$75 million in economic assistance, \$2.5 million in military assistance, and \$900,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET), are part of the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2004, which Rothman and the full House of Representatives approved today.

"While I am disappointed that the Bush Administration chose to cut aid to Armenia so drastically, I am pleased that given the tight budget constraints placed on Congress by the President, we were successful in restoring \$20.5 million of the President's cut in assistance for Armenia," Rothman said. "I will continue to work in the next fiscal year to return funding for Armenia closer to the \$90 million level that Armenia received in Fiscal Year 2003. Armenia is at a critical juncture right now, and continued U.S. assistance is necessary so that Armenia's growth and the progress that we have witnessed in the past few years can continue."

Of all the former Soviet Republics, Armenia sustained the largest percentage decrease in U.S. assistance as outlined in the Bush Administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2004. The Administration called for only \$49.5 million in economic assistance. Rothman and his colleagues fought and successfully raised that to \$75 million.

"Armenia, as an emerging democracy with a developing free market economic system, needs continued U.S. assistance to see the democratic and economic reforms come to fruition," Rothman stated. "I will continue to fight for a substantial assistance package to Armenia. I will also work with the Administration to push Azerbaijan and Turkey to lift the blockade on Armenia, which is placing unnecessary 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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