

## Rothman Leads Bipartisan Congressional Coalition Urging President Bush to Invite Ukrainian President

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President Bush to Invite Ukrainian President to U.S.

Encourages President to strengthen U.S.-Ukraine relations

Washington, DC - Encouraged and hopeful about the prospect of enhancing U.S.-Ukraine relations in the wake of the recent presidential election, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today led a bipartisan group of House members calling on President Bush to invite newly-elected Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to come to the United States for an official state visit. Rothman and his colleagues also congratulated Ukraine on following the democratic processes that ultimately led to the conduct of a free and fair election for the Ukrainian presidency and the peaceful swearing-in of President Yushchenko.

"We are writing to urge you to establish a relationship with Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and encourage him to schedule a state visit to the White House promptly," Rothman wrote to President Bush in a letter that 19 of his House colleagues also signed. "As you well know, the outcome of the recent Ukrainian elections provides the opportunity for Ukraine to become more closely integrated in Euro-Atlantic institutions, demonstrate true democratic governance under the rule of law, and operate a genuine free market economy. It is critical that at this time we recognize the importance of the relationship between the United States and Ukraine and reach out to President Yushchenko in an effort to enhance these relations."

According to Rothman, with this recent election, the Ukrainian people have demonstrated their desire to become a true democracy. The first and second rounds of voting on October 31, 2004 and November 21, 2004, respectively, were fraught with corruption and fraud, including reports of government-run media bias, abuse of absentee ballots, and voter intimidation. Taking a step which demonstrated Ukraine's elected representatives' commitment to the rule of law and democratic governance, the Ukrainian Parliament responded by approving a resolution that called the elections invalid. This action was later reinforced when the Ukrainian Supreme Court invalidated the election and called for a third round of voting on December 26, 2004. Following weeks of protests and debates, 77 percent of the population turned out to vote in the election held on December 26, 2004.

"As a demonstration of American solidarity with the Ukrainian people and its newly-elected leader and in an effort to further strengthen U.S.-Ukraine relations, we believe it is important for you to urge President Yushchenko to come to the White House for a state visit in the near future," Rothman wrote.

Rothman is an active member of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, an organization that focuses on issues related to Ukraine and Ukrainian-Americans.

