

## *Action Alert*

### **It's a New Congress. Help to Grow the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues.**

#### **BACKGROUND**

First created in 1995, the Congressional Hellenic Caucus is a bipartisan group of concerned members of Congress working to strengthen relations between the United States and longtime, reliable NATO ally Greece, and with our strategic partner in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Republic of Cyprus. The Caucus brings congressional attention to key diplomatic, military, and human rights issues in a critical part of the world.

Historically, Hellenic Caucus members have participated in various Hellenic Caucus events, including member meetings with heads of state, and educational briefings on Greece's and Cyprus's economic and energy sectors. The Hellenic Caucus also provides frequent updates from foreign ministry officials on the state of Cypriot reunification negotiations, as well as a focus on religious freedom issues of the Ecumenical Patriarchate—the world's oldest Christian Church.

Members of the Caucus promote legislation and distribute information to those interested about U.S. policy toward the eastern Mediterranean. For example, the Caucus has been responsible for sponsoring legislation related to the U.S.-Greece strategic partnership, including enhancing defense and security cooperation; the reunification of Cyprus, and the reopening of the Orthodox Theological School of Halki in Turkey, among others. Without the Hellenic Caucus, AHEPA and the American Hellenic community would not have been able to attain a great policy achievement, Greece's entry into the United States' Visa Waiver Program (VWP) in 2010.

#### **STATUS**

There are 101 members of the House of Representatives who are members of the Hellenic Caucus.

- [Click here to see listing of Hellenic Caucus members.](#)

**Note:** The Caucus does not include U.S. senators as members. Just U.S. representatives.

#### **ACTION**

Did you see your member of Congress listed above? If not, please encourage your representative to join the Hellenic Caucus.

If your representative is already a member, please contact them to thank them for their support.

#### **How Do I Contact My Member of Congress?**

##### VIA Internet/E-mail/Letter/FAX

- Find your U.S. representative [here](#).

##### VIA Telephone

- In addition to writing your elected representative, you can also call him/her. You can contact your U.S. Representative through the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

#### **HELPFUL TIPS**

- ✓ Identify yourself as a constituent.
- ✓ If calling, ask to speak with the **Foreign Affairs Legislative Assistant** or **Legislative Director**.
- ✓ Keep your message/request for the representative to join the Hellenic Caucus as brief and as focused as possible.
- ✓ For expediency, we recommend sending an email or telephoning as opposed to correspondence that is mailed. However, faxing/mailing a letter is suitable.

- ✓ Remember, members of Congress work for you and they want to hear from you.
- ✓ **Note:** For the purposes of record keeping, please send a copy of your correspondence to: Executive Director Elena Saviolakis, [elena@ahempa.org](mailto:elena@ahempa.org).
  - This will allow us to know who in Congress has been contacted for future follow-up.

## **SAMPLE CONTENT for EMAIL or LETTER**

[DATE]

Hon. \_\_\_\_\_  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

On behalf of the Daughters of Penelope (DOP), the leading women's service association for the nation's American citizens of Greek heritage and Philhellenes, I write as a constituent and as one of the organization's local leaders, to ask you to join the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues.

First created in 1995, the Congressional Hellenic Caucus is a bipartisan group of concerned members of Congress working to strengthen relations between the United States and longtime, reliable NATO ally Greece, and with our strategic partner in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Republic of Cyprus. The Caucus brings congressional attention to key diplomatic, military, and human rights issues in a critical part of the world. In fact, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt stated, "The United States sees Greece as a pillar of stability in this region...We see Greece as an important partner, not just because of the way that we work together – for instance our military forces in Souda Bay – but also the way in which Greece is deepening its partnership with American friends in the region..." Last Congress, 113 U.S. representatives joined the Caucus and participated in various Hellenic Caucus events, including member meetings with heads of state, and educational briefings on Greece's and Cyprus's economic and energy sectors. The Hellenic Caucus also provides frequent updates from foreign ministry officials on the state of Cypriot reunification negotiations, as well as a focus on religious freedom issues of the Ecumenical Patriarchate—the world's oldest Christian Church.

Your membership in the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues will signal to the Greek American community your commitment to a strong and viable U.S. relationship with Greece and a firm interest in issues of concern to the Greek American community. In addition, through our chapters, the Greek American community of [Insert City, County or Town] works to strengthen the community at-large. [Cite a few local examples: AHEPA Housing, Meals on Wheels, Donations to First-responders, Veterans, etc.]

For more information on the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, please contact Co-Chairs Representatives Carolyn Maloney or Gus Bilirakis.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We anticipate a favorable reply.

Respectfully submitted,

[NAME]  
[CHAPTER/DISTRICT TITLE, if appropriate]  
[FULL ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP]