

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 22, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding recent information indicating that U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans would be departing early this summer from his assignment as a result of declaring in February 2005 that “the Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the twentieth century,” during public exchanges with Armenian-American communities. It is our hope that these announcements are inaccurate given Evans’ service to his country – in the Foreign Service and as a well-respected ambassador – in a region of strategic importance to the United States.

Ambassador Evans issued a “clarification” and then a “correction” of his remarks. Last June, the American Foreign Service Association originally intended to honor the Ambassador for his “constructive dissent” and intellectual courage and initiative with the Christian A. Herter Award as a result of his recognition of the Armenian Genocide, but later withdrew the distinction.

It now appears that Evans is being forced out of his post. We must not allow the perception to linger that he is being required to vacate his position early for accurately labeling the cataclysmic events of 1915 as genocide.

By employing the proper term last year, the Ambassador was only building on previous statements by our leaders in government, as well as the repeated declarations of numerous world-renowned scholars. In 1981, President Reagan issued a presidential proclamation that said in part: “like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it -- and like too many other persecutions of too many other people -- the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten . . .” In effect, Ambassador Evans did nothing more than succinctly repeat the conclusions enunciated by those before him.

We have also heard that concerns raised by the Government of Turkey regarding Ambassador Evans’ remarks may have played a role in this affair. We certainly hope that this was not the case. Were the United States to allow the views or beliefs of a third country to interfere with our diplomatic postings to the Republic of Armenia, it would establish a dangerous precedent and be injurious to the long-standing relationship built on trust and friendship between the two countries. In addition, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried recently stated his friendship and support for Evans.

At this critical time in U.S. history and the South Caucasus region, we respectfully request your clarification regarding the current status of Ambassador John Evans. It is our hope that that he will not be forced to prematurely end his exemplary service to the United States and the Republic of Armenia because of his reaffirmation of the U.S. record on the Armenian Genocide.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

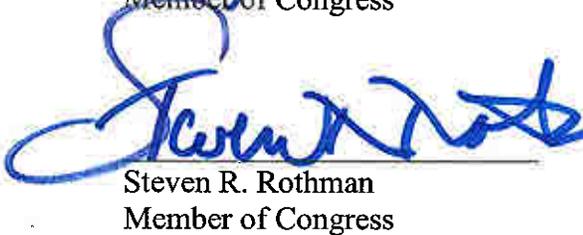
  
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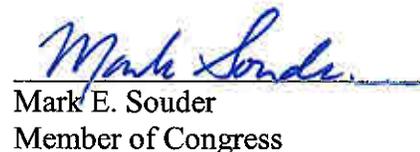
  
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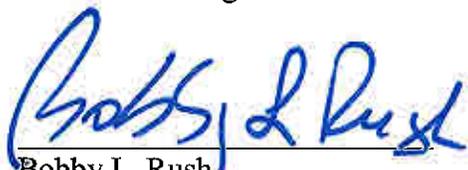
  
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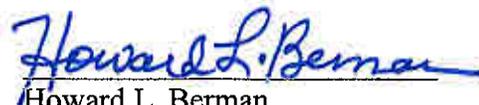
  
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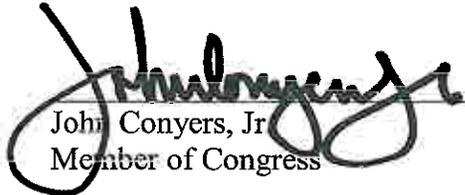
  
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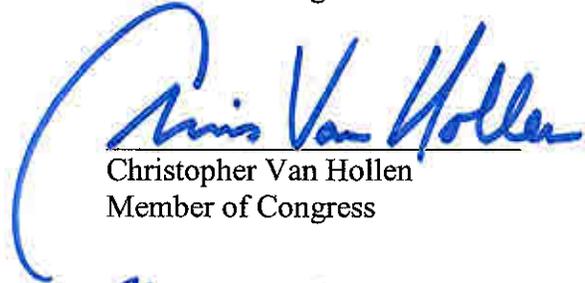
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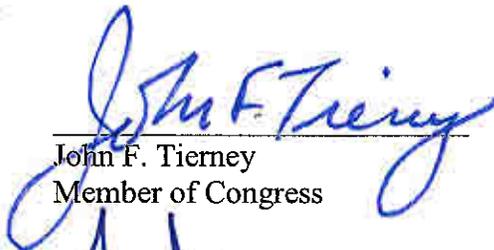
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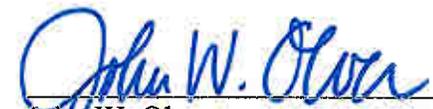
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