



# ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2006

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## **ARMENIAN ISSUES SUPPORTERS TO LEAD IN DEMOCRATIC SENATE *REID, DURBIN & BIDEN POISED FOR KEY POSITIONS***

Washington, DC – One day after winning majority control in the House of Representatives, Democrats took back the U.S. Senate, with Armenian issues supporters Senators Harry Reid (D-NV) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) positioned to serve as Majority Leader and Majority Whip respectively, in the 110th Congress. Senator Joseph Biden, Jr. (D-DE), also a staunch supporter, is expected to chair the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which oversees policy concerning Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.

All three Senators have raised awareness of the Armenian Genocide as cosponsors of S. Res. 320, a resolution reaffirming the U.S. record which is currently pending before the Foreign Relations Committee. Reid, Durbin and Biden also voted to maintain Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act in an historic Senate floor fight in 1999 of which, Senators Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) led the effort in maintaining Section 907 at that time. Sarbanes announced his retirement from the Senate earlier this year and did not seek re-election. The Assembly awarded him for his longstanding support of Armenian issues during the National Advocacy Conference and Banquet in March of this year.

“The Assembly will continue its bipartisan approach in the Senate and looks forward to working with our Senate friends, as well as reaching out to the new class of incoming Senators,” said Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “We have much at stake and will continue to promote an aggressive agenda to ensure a strong, prosperous and democratic Armenia.”

Ardouny also noted that Reid and Durbin, along with House Speaker-to-be Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD), who is running for Majority Leader, have been consistent supporters of Armenian issues. Their anticipated leadership positions in the next Congress will provide new opportunities for advancing key issues.

Additionally, Senator John Ensign (R-NV), who introduced S. Res. 320 with Durbin last year, was re-elected for a second term. Supporters of the resolution who also won re-election include Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Herbert Kohl (D-WI), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI).

Senate Democrats Russ Feingold (WI), John Kerry (MA), Barbara Boxer (CA) and Christopher Dodd (CT), who also support S. Res. 320, are positioned for Subcommittee Chairmanships on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is in line to chair the important State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee, a position currently held by Republican Senator Mitch

McConnell. The Kentucky lawmaker, who has been instrumental in securing humanitarian, technical and economic development assistance for Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, is expected to serve as the Subcommittee's Ranking Member in the next Congress.

Several other Armenian issues supporters are slated to chair full committees, including Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) - Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; John Kerry (D-MA) - Small Business and Entrepreneurship; Carl Levin (D-MI) - Armed Services; Tim Johnson (D-SD) - Select Committee on Ethics; Herbert H. Kohl (D-WI) - Select Committee on Aging; and Christopher Dodd (D-CT) - Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. Furthermore, Senators Charles Schumer (NY), Jack Reed (RI), Dianne Feinstein (CA), Tom Harkin (IA), and Barbara Mikulski (MD) - are all poised to chair various subcommittees.

Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), who has worked against the Armenian community's efforts to reaffirm the U.S. record on the Genocide, is in line to chair the full Appropriations Committee.

Senator George Allen (R-VA), an ardent supporter of Armenian issues, conceded his re-election bid today, while Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Members Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) both won seats in the Senate. Brown and Cardin both voted for Section 907 in the House floor fight in 1998 and support Armenia-specific legislation in the current Congress.

As previously reported, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) was re-elected for a second term, while Republican Rick Santorum was defeated in Pennsylvania's Senate contest.

The Armenian Assembly is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issue. It is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt membership organization.

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NR#2006-098

**Photographs:**



**Caption:** Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL) with Board of Trustees Executive Committee Member Lisa Esayian.



**Caption:** Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD) with Board of Trustees Executive Committee Member Annie Totah at the Assembly's National Advocacy Conference and Banquet in March 2006.