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LAWMAKERS OPPOSE CREATION OF HISTORICAL COMMISSION ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Washington, D.C. --- U.S. Reps. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) and Mark Steven Kirk (R-IL), Co-Chairmen of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, along with U.S. Reps. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and George Radanovich (R-CA), released the following statement today to reiterate their concern with the creation of a historical commission to review the events of 1915 to 1923. The lawmakers believe Turkey should acknowledge its past and the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

“As leaders of the Armenia Caucus in the House of Representatives, we share the concern of the Armenian-American community regarding the possibility of creating a historical commission to review the events of 1915 to 1923. This is a thoroughly discredited idea; there is no dispute among scholars that the Armenian people were the subject of genocide during the waning days of the Ottoman Empire and an historical commission is another effort to obfuscate the truth -- or worse, to rewrite it.

“Turkey cannot be allowed to re-invent this tragic part of its history as a price for normal relations with Armenia. To do so means acquiescence in a charade that demeans the memory of so many victims.

“As Secretary of State Clinton and other senior officials work to maintain stability in the region, we urge them to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of the Armenian-American community, which maintains strong ties to Armenia and is an invaluable source of information and counsel. We also advise the State Department to take into account the enormous disparity in economic, military and diplomatic power between Turkey and Armenia and to work to ensure that our diplomatic efforts serve to end the Turkish blockade of Armenia, without Turkish bullying of our Armenian ally into unwarranted concessions or a whitewash of one of history's true horrors.”