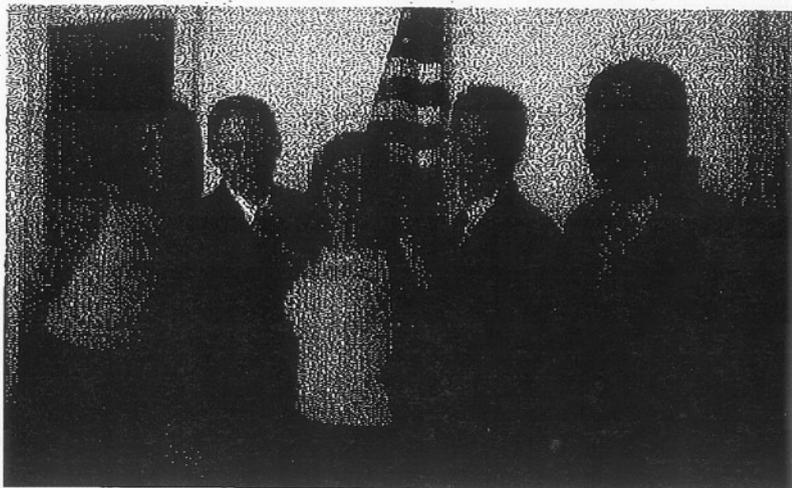


Armenian-American Activists Discuss Key Community Concerns With Rep. Mark Kirk

WASHINGTON, DC—Armenian-American activists met with Congressman Mark Kirk (R-IL) recently to discuss issues regarding Turkey's continued denial of the Armenian Genocide and efforts to educate Illinois residents about this crime against humanity, reported the Armenian National Committee (ANC) of Illinois.

The June 24 meeting, held at Rep. Kirk's Washington office, provided constituents an opportunity to thank the Congressman for his outspoken support of US reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide. During the 108th Congress, Rep. Kirk has cosponsored H.Res. 193, a resolution commemorating the 15th anniversary of the US implementation of the UN Genocide Convention. He has also joined 167 of his colleagues in urging President George W. Bush to properly characterize the Armenian Genocide as "genocide" in his yearly statement regarding the tragedy. Activists also thanked the Congressman for his support of H.Res. 528—legislation that would open the door to a closer US-Armenia trade relationship.

The meeting included an extensive discussion on efforts to implement the teaching of the Armenian Genocide in high schools in Illinois. The activists noted that for decades Illinois Governors have been issuing proclamations marking April 24 of each year "Armenian Martyrs Day," in memory of the over 1.5 million men, women, and children slaughtered by the Ottoman Turkish government from 1915-



Rep. Mark Kirk (2nd from left) with ANC activists (L to R) Karine Birazian, Alina Azizian, Mike Gedjeyan, and Abraham Niziblian

1923. Rep. Kirk stressed the importance of educating Illinois students about the tragedy, noting "When our children learn the history of the world, it is important that they learn about the very best and very worst of history. Details of the Armenian Genocide are vital to understanding one of the key lessons of history."

The ANC of Illinois delegation meeting with Rep. Kirk included ANCA Government Affairs Director Abraham Niziblian, and Armenian-American activists Alina Azizian, Mike Gedjeyan, and Karine Birazian. Birazian, a 2000 graduate from Glenbrook North High School, is currently interning for eight weeks at the Armenian National Committee of

America in Washington. While attending Glenbrook North, with the help of teachers from the Social Studies Department, Birazian lectured about the Armenian Genocide to over 800 students. She was also active in an Armenian Youth Federation campaign to donate Armenian-related books to Northbrook Public Library, both Glenbrook High Schools, and other libraries in the area.

Following the meeting, Birazian noted, "I am honored that Congressman Kirk actively supports educating people about the Armenian Genocide. His dedication and devotion to the constituents in his district on key Armenian-American matters is greatly appreciated."