

TURKISH COALITION *of* AMERICA

Annual Report 2017





Contents

- 2** Executive Summary
- 3** Financial Statement
- 4** Educating the Public
- 5** Investing in Youth and Education
- 13** Building Bridges
- 17** In the Community
- 19** Turkish American Legal Defense Fund
- 20** In Congress

Executive Summary

Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) was founded in 2007 as an educational, charitable organization with a mission to:

- Foster friendship, understanding, and cooperation between the United States and Turkey.
- Expand Turkish American outreach to American public and private entities.
- Promote and advance the interests of the Turkish American community and Turks.
- Protect the character and ensure a realistic portrayal of Turkey and Turkish Americans in the media and the arts.
- Identify and recognize the achievements of Turkish Americans in academia, arts, business, education, government, public service, and science.

TCA's work is undertaken by a professional team, interns, and volunteers from offices in Washington, DC. and Boston.

TCA LEADERSHIP

YALCIN AYASLI, Chairman
G. LINCOLN MCCURDY, President

TCA STAFF

LIZ CLARK, Project Coordinator
CAROL ANN JACKSON, Executive Assistant, Boston
SEZAN MCDANIEL, Project Coordinator
GULHAN OZKAN, Executive Assistant, Turkey
LOUETTE RAGUSA, Executive Assistant, Washington, DC
DAVID SALTZMAN, Counsel

Turkish Coalition of America
www.tc-america.org
www.facebook.com/TurkishCoalition
www.twitter.com/TCAmerica

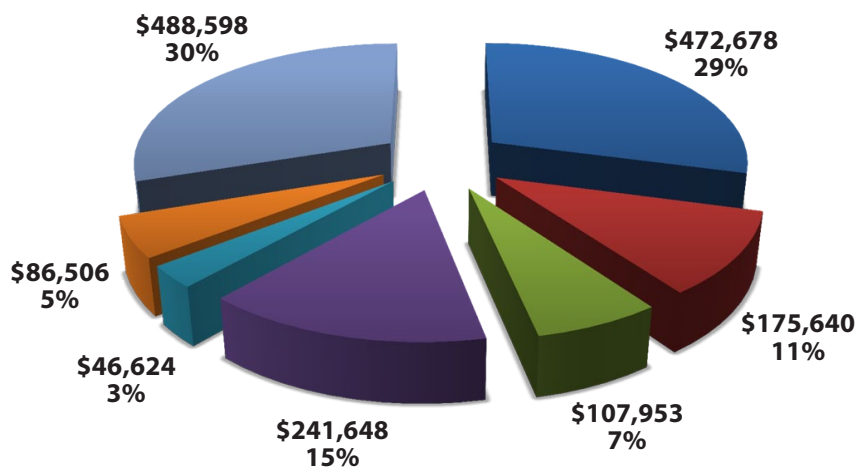
Washington, DC
 1510 H St., NW, Ste. 900
 Washington, DC 20005
 Phone: 202-370-1399
 Fax: 202-370-1398

Boston
 48 Jonas Brown Cir.
 Concord, MA 01742
 Phone: 978-318-0047
 Fax: 978-318-0037

Financial Statement

Turkish Coalition of America invested a total of **\$1,619,647** in 2017 to pursue its mission and implement its programs. The following is a categorized breakdown of all TCA administrative and program expenses.

PUBLIC EDUCATION	\$175,640
• Education and Public Awareness through publications, TCA website, and social media	
YOUTH AND EDUCATION	\$107,953
• Internships	
• Scholarships	
• Youth Congress	
• University of Utah Turkish Studies Project	
HERITAGE AND HUMANITARIAN GRANTS	\$241,648
• UMD & ACBH – Supplemental Office Grant	
• Syrian Refugee Campaign	
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	\$46,624
• Grassroots Grants	
• Community Sponsorships	
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$488,598
• Turkish American Legal Defense Fund	
CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH	\$86,506
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$472,678



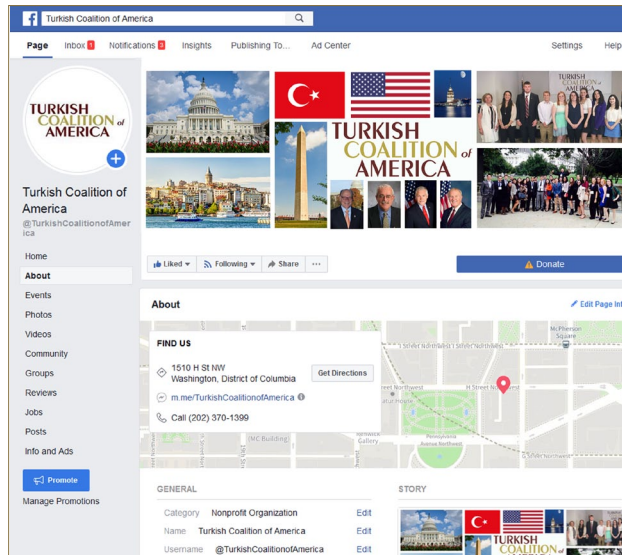
Educating the Public

Through outreach efforts and a proactive strategy, TCA works to ensure accurate and balanced media portrayals of Turkish Americans and Turkey.

Throughout 2017, TCA's team monitored American, Turkish, and international media. TCA staff engaged with journalists through in-person meetings and by providing fact sheets and information about both history and current events regarding Turkish Americans and Turkey.

Another source of information for the general public is the [TCA website](#), which features topical as well as in-depth information on issues concerning Turkish Americans and U.S.-Turkey relations. The website features an extensive compilation of reference materials, talking points, and resource and reading lists on Turkey. In 2017, the TCA website received 1,354,456 hits.

In 2017, TCA continued its social media campaign to expand its online presence. In the last year, TCA's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) profiles reached thousands of people.



Investing in Youth and Education

TCA is proud of its pillar programs for youth that are designed to enrich Turkish American participation in public affairs and to foster future generations of Turkish American leaders.

TCA Washington Summer Internship Program

The TCA Washington Summer Internship Program provides young Turkish American college students and recent graduates the opportunity to work in Washington, DC as interns with members of the U.S. Congress and select non-governmental organizations and think tanks. The goal of the program is to foster young Turkish Americans' interest in public affairs and service as well as enhance their knowledge of American political life. It also seeks to prepare future Turkish American political and community leaders.

In 2017, 16 Turkish American students completed internships through the TCA Washington Summer Internship Program. Participants learned firsthand about the U.S. political process and how Washington operates while gaining valuable career experience in the nation's capital. Over the course of their internships, these young Turkish Americans became great ambassadors for their communities and for Turkey on Capitol Hill and in the surrounding policy community.

The 2017 TCA interns worked in the offices of Representatives Alcee Hastings (D-FL/20th), Michael Capuano (D-MA/7th), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ/12th), Greg Meeks (D-NY/5th), and Darren Soto (D-FL/9th), as well as the Virginia Democratic Party, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), and the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA). Since the program's inception in 2007, TCA has provided a total of 178 internship opportunities to Turkish Americans and friends of Turkey.

As a part of the Washington Summer Intern Program, TCA hosted the annual Summer Intern Orientation Session at its Washington, DC office on July 11. Interns gathered for a day of professional development and briefings about TCA, the [Turkish Cultural Foundation](#) (TCF), the [Turkish American Legal Defense Fund](#) (TALDF), the Turkish American community, and political activism and engagement in the U.S.

On June 9th, members of the Turkish American community met with [Congressional Turkey Caucus](#) member [Rep. Alex Mooney \(R-WV/2nd\)](#) at TCA's offices where they spoke with him about U.S.-Turkey relations and Turkish Americans. Rep. Mooney also spoke with the TCA summer interns about their education and career goals and the importance of getting politically involved.

Also on June 9th, members of the Turkish American community met with Congressional Turkey Caucus member [Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger \(D-MD/2nd\)](#) at TCA's offices where they spoke with him about U.S.-Turkey relations and issues in the region. TCA summer interns also had the opportunity to speak with Rep. Ruppersberger about their careers and the importance of getting involved politically.

Also in June, Turkish American [Judge Jay \(Ceyhun\) Karahan](#) visited TCA headquarters in Washington, DC to speak with TCA Washington summer interns about public service, his career as a judge and attorney, and his experiences running for elected office. TCA summer interns also had the opportunity to ask questions and get advice about their own careers and future political ambitions. Judge Karahan serves as the judge for Harris County Criminal Court Number 8 in Houston, TX, a position he has held since 2003. Judge Karahan is one of the two highest elected Turkish American officials.

Investing in Youth and Education



2017 TCA Washington Summer Interns with Judge Jay Karahan, Harris County Criminal Court at Law #8 in Houston, TX.



TCA 2017 Interns with Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD/2nd).

“

My time spent at TCA through both the Youth Congress and the Internship Program have taught me a lot about politics and the environment of working in Washington D.C. ”

- Adam Littleton, 2017 TCA Washington Summer Intern

“

I was one of the participants of the TCA Youth Congress in 2015 and finally last year in order to learn more about American Politics and Public Affairs decided to join TCA with the internship program. Its been really nice experience for me since I have attended several events in DC which were really helpful to understand the way how American foreign policy is shaped. By thinking that US-Turkish relations are passing through difficult period its been great timing and experience to observe how the dynamics are changing. Nevertheless, I would love to learn more about lobbying activities and their traditional role in the American Public Policy. Currently I work as Assistant Professor in International Relations at Bursa Technical University in Turkey. I am conducting research on migration and the American foreign policy towards Middle East.

”

- Nuri Tahir, 2017 TCA Washington Summer Intern



TCA 2017 Interns with Congressman Alex Mooney (R-WV/2nd).



Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC/3rd) with Adam Littleton.

Investing in Youth and Education

TCA Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress

The annual Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress is a program specifically geared toward involving young Turkish Americans in the U.S. political system. It offers college students, recent graduates, and young professionals of Turkish American heritage the opportunity to spend a weekend in Washington, DC learning about the U.S.-Turkey relationship, the political systems of both countries, and the importance of political advocacy in their own lives.

2017 marked TCA's fourth annual Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress. Twenty-three young Turkish Americans attended and came away inspired to take a more active role in local and national politics and to become effective representatives of the Turkish American community.

Since the program began in 2014, 105 Turkish Americans have attended the Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress. Applications for the Youth Congress open every year in July.

2017 Youth Congress delegates attended meetings and briefings with Turkish policy experts, congressional staffers, representatives from the U.S. Department of State, journalists, political activists, and leaders in the Turkish American community. They also had the chance to learn more about civic engagement from two former members of Congress, the Honorable Al Wynn (D-MD/4th, 1992-2008) and Dan Maffei (D-NY/24th, 2013-2015). Additionally, two representatives from the [Council of Turkish Canadians](#) (CTC) accompanied the delegates throughout the weekend and briefed the group on the political system of Canada and the challenges faced by the Turkish Canadian community, providing an impetus for cross-border dialogue and relationship building between Turkish Canadians and Turkish Americans.

Delegates toured the U.S. Capitol and the Turkish Ambassador's historical residence, and they attended the [Maryland American Turkish Association's](#) (MATA) Republic Day Gala celebrating the 94th Annual Turkish Republic Day. Their visit to the nation's capital was topped off with a concert to watch Pink Martini perform with the National Symphony Orchestra at the historic John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and a boat cruise brunch on the Potomac.

Over the course of the weekend, Youth Congress delegates were able to network with other young Turkish Americans while learning about the U.S.-Turkey relationship and the political systems of both countries. They engaged in an active dialogue on the state of U.S.-Turkey relations, and they learned about the role that citizens can play in policy-making as well as the steps they can take to be successful Turkish American advocates.

Investing in Youth and Education



Youth Leadership Congress delegates visit the U.S. Capitol.



Youth Leadership Congress delegates visit the Mustafa Kemal Ataturk statue located in Sheridan Circle, Washington, DC.

Investing in Youth and Education

“

I extremely enjoyed my time during the Youth Congress. I learned a plethora of valuable skills from former Congressional members and State Department officials. I also enjoyed meeting other Turkish Americans my age, whom I still am in touch with till this day. ”

- Adam Littleton, Greenville, NC, 2017 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate

“

My experience with the Youth Congress was great! I definitely learned a lot during my time and hope to keep in touch with TCA in the future. After TCA Youth Congress, I continued my job as a consultant at the Concord Group. As an update, I am currently in New York and will be beginning my Master program in Urban Planning at NYU. ”

- Beyza Seflek, El Cerrito, CA, 2017 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate

“

Having the opportunity to network with Turkish-American Students is something that is extremely valuable. Being from Los Angeles, where the Turkish community is large yet unconnected, I have not had the opportunity to interact with many Turkish-Americans my age. The TCA Youth Congress has allowed me to interact with Turkish-Americans my age from all around the United States and Canada and has exposed me to a greater community of Turkish-Americans that I can reach out too and work with in the future.

”

- Furkan Yalcin, Los Angeles, CA, 2017 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate



Youth Leadership Congress delegates listen to former member of Congress Dan Maffei (D-NY/24th, 2013-2015) speak at the U.S. Capitol in the Speaker's Dining Room.

TCA - University of Utah Turkish Studies Project

In 2017, TCA continued to fund the [Turkish Studies Project](#) at the University of Utah, which is directed by University of Utah Professor Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz. TCA provided this major [multi-year grant](#) to the University of Utah in 2009 to establish an academic program to examine the origins of modern ethnic cleansing, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of nation states in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The grant was renewed in 2015 with an expanded geographical focus entitled "The Origins and Contemporary Challenges of Turkic Peoples." Under the current grant term, the Project aims to explore the past histories and shaping of contemporary Turkic-majority states and their relationships with modern Turkey via scholarly work, community participation, social media, and support for new research.

The project entitled Memory, Identity, History and Nationalism: Socio-economic and Political Origins and Contemporary Challenges of Turkic Peoples of Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Including Relations with Modern Turkey ("Origins and Contemporary Challenges of Turkic Peoples") aimed to explore the past histories and shaping of contemporary Turkic-majority states and their relationships with modern Turkey via scholarly work, community participation, social media, and support for new research.

The Turkish Studies Project in 2017 provided fellowships to graduate students and scholars who are undertaking research about Turkic peoples and states and their relationships with modern Turkey. The program also provided support for them to attend and present at conferences in the U.S., Turkey, and Europe and to translate scholarly material to English. The project has continued its support for the following two fellows. Hakan Erdagoz had his PhD defense in April 2018 and Perparim Gutaj will be defending in November 2018.

In 2017, a number of academic and journalistic writings composed under the Turkish Studies Project were published or selected for future publication. The TSP also organized a two-day conference to examine the political experiences of the Muslim communities in the Balkans and the experiences of the Armenians in Anatolia. The papers of this issue will be published in Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs in 2019.

In addition, the project's Ph.D. fellow Hakan Erdagoz successfully defended his dissertation titled "Accommodation of Religious Diversity and States In between Minorities and National Identity: Muslims in France and Russia." Erdagoz published in the academic journals Sociology of Islam and Nations and Nationalism, and delivered a presentation on "Divided Loyalties of Minorities: Turkish Diasporas in Europe and the Dynamics of their Support for 'Home'" at the TSP conference. Turkish Studies Project Fellow Perparim Gutaj completed his dissertation on the patterns of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, His most recent research paper (co-authored) is accepted for publication in the Journal of Balkans and Near East Studies. In addition, he has published two research articles, and nine book reviews in Nations and Nationalism, Political Studies Review, Insight Turkey, and Mediterranean Quarterly. The TSP also awarded a post-doctoral fellowship to Jamil Hasanli for 2017-2018. Dr. Hasanli will work on a new book project on Leadership and Nationalism in Azerbaijan: Ali Mardan bey Topchibashov, Founder and Creator. (Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe. Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, 2019).

Investing in Youth and Education

“

The University of Utah has been an ideal place for the Turkish Studies Project. It has an excellent library containing one of the world's best Turkish collections and hosts a diverse student and faculty population many of whom are experts on matters related to Turkey. Its university press has produced a fair number of remarkable books on subjects related to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, including my manuscript, entitled *Conflict and Coexistence: Kurds, Armenians, and Turks in Eastern Anatolia 1800-1878* to be published soon. The Turkish Studies project has allowed me the opportunity to expand my research on early modern Eastern Anatolia through a generous post-doc grant, 2015-2016. It has also allowed me to gather documents at the Ottoman archives in Istanbul, Turkey to produce cutting-edge research that has contributed to the ever relevant debate on the status of Armenians and Kurds in the Ottoman Empire. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities I have been afforded by the Turkish Studies Project and hope to see it continue to benefit the research of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire for years to come. ”

- Brad Dennis, Utah Valley University



“

In my view, mainstream academia in the United States has not yet fully embraced Turkish Studies and those of us in the field must work hard to have their voices and scholarship recognized. Moreover, scholars working in the field of Turkish Studies often face adversarial challenges from various authors and communities - making the advancement of their work difficult. The Turkish Studies Project at the University of Utah provides a path to overcome these impediments to scholarship. In particular, the project provides a critically important corrective to these adversarial challenges by offering academic opportunities in the way of research funding, conferences, and publishing. My own research and body of work have benefitted tremendously from interaction with Professor Hakan Yavuz and from participating in the opportunities offered by the University of Utah's Turkish Studies Project. My own scholarship is the better for it. ”

- Edward J. Erickson, PhD, Scholar-in-Residence, Clark Center for Global Engagement, State University of New York at Cortland

Building Bridges

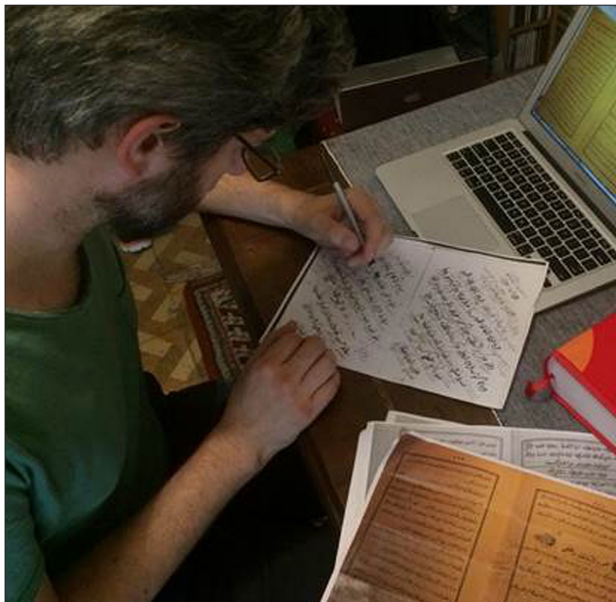
TCA has enhanced its educational mission by sponsoring a diverse collection of scholarship programs.

TCA Study Abroad Scholarship for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities

Through the [TCA Study Abroad Scholarships for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities program](#), TCA provides up to 100 scholarships per year for American students of African, Armenian, Bosnian, Filipino, Hispanic, Macedonian, and Native American descent who have been accepted to a study abroad program in Turkey, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2017, 7 scholarships were awarded, bringing the total number of scholarships awarded to 487 since this program's inception in 2008. American minority students who receive the TCA Study Abroad Scholarship studied in subject areas ranging from Accounting to Architecture, with the most popular subjects being business and political science.

Scholarship recipients came from American colleges and universities across the country, including Western Kentucky University, Seattle University, University of Texas at Austin, and University of California, Berkeley. Scholarship recipients studied at Yildiz Technical and Koc Universities in Istanbul, Turkey; Ankara University in Ankara, Turkey; and the American University of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



2017 TCA scholarship recipient Jason Rodriguez Vivrette studying Ottoman Turkish at Koc University, Istanbul.

“

As a Mexican-American graduate student of Comparative Literature focusing on interactions between Turkish, Arabic and Italian over a number of centuries, it is not only challenging to find scholars to work with at American institutions who can provide mentorship across these literary traditions, but it is even difficult to find scholars well-versed in pre-twentieth-century writing in Turkish. Being able to spend an entire semester studying Ottoman Turkish literature with a leading scholar at Yıldız Teknik University in Istanbul was thus a rare and invaluable opportunity for me; I am truly indebted to the Turkish Coalition of America for making this learning opportunity possible by way of their generous Study Abroad Scholarship for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities. ”

- Jason Rodriguez Vivrette, 2017 TCA scholarship recipient

Building Bridges

Meetings with Turkish and American Universities

On January 23, TCA hosted a meeting with students from the [American Studies Center at Bahcesehir University](#) in Istanbul as part of the group's visit to Washington, DC. TCA gave presentations and answered questions about the U.S. government, civic engagement, congressional caucuses, and TCA programs and activities. TCA accompanied the students on a tour of the U.S. Capitol and facilitated meetings on Capitol Hill with staff members of Turkey Caucus Co-Chairs Congressmen [Gerry Connolly \(D-VA/11th\)](#) and [Pete Sessions \(R-TX/32nd\)](#).

In March 2017, TCA facilitated meetings on Capitol Hill for Dr. Muhammed Sahin, rector of [MEF University](#) in Istanbul, during his visit to Washington, DC to attend the [American Council on Education's \(ACE\)](#) annual meeting. Dr. Sahin met with staff from the offices of [Rep. Jared Polis \(D-CO/2nd\)](#) and [Rep. Virginia Foxx \(R-NC/5th\)](#).

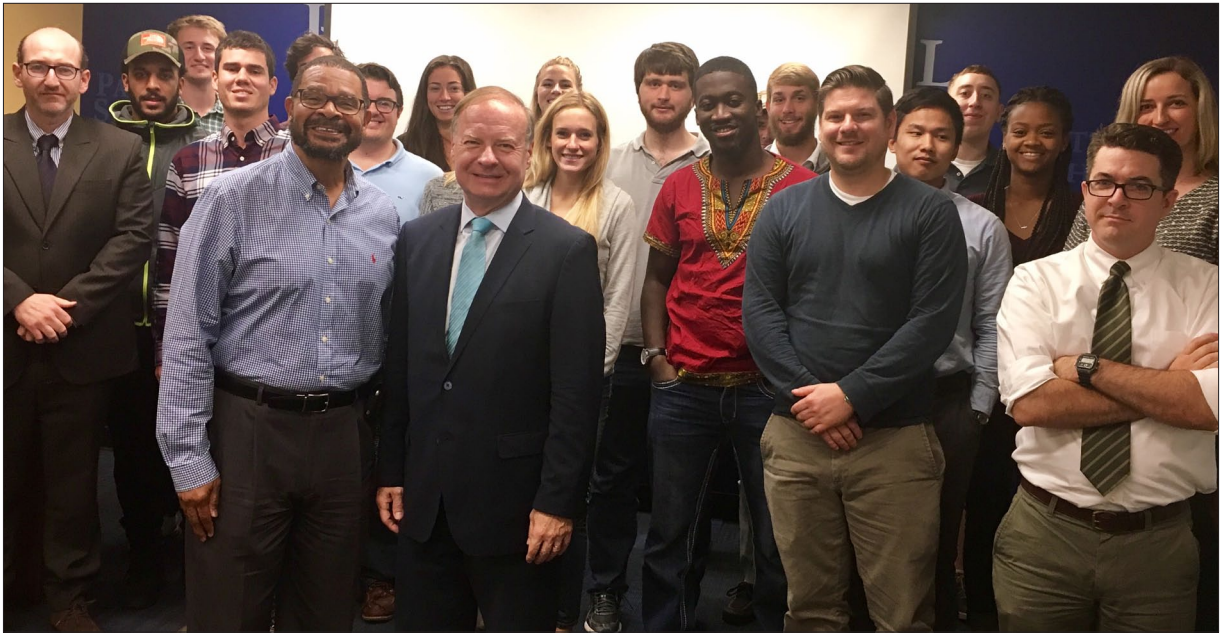
On August 4, Georgetown University [Professor Maurice Jackson](#) visited TCA where he discussed Turkey and the African American community. Professor Jackson teaches in the History Department and African American Studies Program and is an Affiliated Professor of Music (Jazz). Professor Jackson previously lectured in Turkey and was the first chair of the DC Commission on African American Affairs.

TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy visited the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY on October 12 where he spoke with graduate students and faculty from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce about Turkey, U.S.- Turkey relations, and issues important to Turkish Americans.

Following the TCA visit, students and faculty from the University of Kentucky Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce attended a reception commemorating the 34th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC on Wednesday, November 15. At the reception, they had the opportunity to speak with Turkish Ambassador Serdar Kilic, TRNC Representative Ismet Korukoglu, and members of the Turkish American community from the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. Ambassador Kilic also invited the delegation to take a tour of the historic Turkish Ambassador's Residence in Washington, DC.

TCA visited [Spelman College](#) on November 7, where President G. Lincoln McCurdy gave a presentation to students about Turkey and U.S.-Turkey relations and spoke with them about [TCA's Study Abroad Scholarships for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities](#).

Building Bridges



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy visiting university of Kentucky with graduate students and faculty from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce.



Students and faculty from the University of Kentucky Patterson School with Washington Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ismet Korukoglu.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Project Coordinator Sezan McDaniel with faculty and students from Spelman College.

Building Bridges

Heritage Partnerships

TCA established special [partnerships](#) with the Bosniak and Macedonian communities in the United States to enhance the historical heritage and contemporary bonds of friendship that the Turkish people have with their Balkan neighbors. Over the years, TCA has provided support to the [Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (ACBH) and to the [United Macedonian Diaspora](#) (UMD) to help the two organizations hire professional staff, institute new programs and events, and build their memberships and donor bases.

UMD has grown into an influential voice in the U.S. and globally, representing the interests of Macedonians worldwide. Similarly, TCA's support to ACBH has allowed the organization to grow its presence in Washington, DC, and it has made it possible for young Bosnian Americans to intern in high profile offices in Washington, DC.

TCA received the Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina's (ACBH) Friendship Award at its 10th Anniversary Gala on February 25, 2017. The ACBH Gala also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the U.S. recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) independence. Also honored at the event for their support of BiH were former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., who also served as the Gala's keynote speaker, and former Senator Robert J. Dole.

ACBH is the leading independent, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting the interests of Bosnian Americans and advocating for a united, multi-ethnic and democratic BiH.

TCA's long relationship with ACBH began in 2008 with a \$150,000 matching grant to support ACBH's work in Bosnian American advocacy. A TCA [\\$100,000 grant](#) was given in 2014 to the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) for the removal of land mines in BiH. This was matched by a \$100,000 grant from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement of the



ACBH Executive Director Ajla Delkic (front row, first from the left), TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy (front row, second from left), and ACBH President Mirzeta Hadzikadic (front row, second from right) with ACBH Board Members at the ACBH 10th Anniversary Gala.

U.S. State Department. In 2016 a \$5,000 TCA grant supported an ACBH delegation visit to Washington, DC from two Bosnian advocacy organizations, the [Association of Victims and Witnesses of Genocide](#) and [Mother's Action of the Srebrenica and Zepa Enclaves](#).

Since 2008, TCA has provided 11 [scholarships](#) to Bosnian American students who study abroad in Turkey and BiH; supported several Bosnian Americans congressional [internships](#) in Washington, DC; and sponsored three [Congressional Delegations](#) to BiH (2010, 2012, and 2015). TCA also provides office space to ACBH.

In the Community

Since its founding, TCA has supported Turkish American organizations in an effort to strengthen the Turkish American voice through education and civic participation.

Supporting Community Growth and Civic Contributions

In 2017, TCA continued to support the Turkish American community by providing incentives to Turkish American organizations to enhance their local presence and participation in national community activism.

On Thursday, March 16th, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended [Turkish Philanthropy Funds'](#) (TPF) 10th Anniversary Reception and Dinner in New York. TPF presented its first ever 'Philanthropist of the Year Award' to the eminent Turkish industrialist and businessman Rahmi Koc.

On Friday, March 17th, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended the awards ceremony in New York for [TURKOFAMERICA Magazine's top '40 under 40'](#) most influential Turkish Americans in the U.S. At the awards ceremony, McCurdy had the honor of presenting an award to Ceylan Ecer, an art advisor and dealer in Brooklyn. Ecer was one of the first participants in TCA's Washington Summer Internship Program on Capitol Hill in 2007. In recent years, she has purchased artwork for names such as Leonardo di Caprio, baseball player Alexander Rodriguez, and Monica Bellucci.

In May 2017, TCA created the Turkish American Women's Leadership Initiative to work with local Turkish American organizations and women's groups in an effort to educate and encourage Turkish American women to run for elected office on the local, state, and federal levels; seek positions on governmental commissions; attend political conventions, meetings, and forums; and actively participate in political parties.

On June 1, TCA hosted a forum with the Turkish American community in New York to discuss raising the voice of Turkish Americans in civic and political activism and the Turkish American Women's Leadership Initiative. TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy gave a presentation on the importance of getting politically involved followed by a group discussion with attendees.

On September 29, TCA hosted an event on the 'Success Stories of Turkish American Women in Washington' in collaboration with [Turkish Women's International Network's](#) (TurkishWIN) DC chapter at TCA headquarters. At the event, speakers discussed their successful careers and opportunities and challenges they have faced along the way. Speakers included: Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, Senior Director of Finance and Markets Global Practice at the [World Bank Group](#); Gonul Tol, Director of the [Middle East Institute's](#) Center for Turkish Studies; and Merve Hande Akmehmet, Managing Partner of [Sandalyeci](#) and President of the Hologram Network. The moderator for the event was Sebnem Kalemli-Ozcan, the Neil Moskowitz Endowed Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, College Park.

TCA hosted the [American Turkish Association of Washington, DC's](#) (ATA-DC) Young Cultural Ambassador program orientation at the TCA office on September 5. In commemoration of ATA-DC's 15th Annual Turkish Festival in Washington, DC, 15 high school students served as ATA-DC Young Cultural Ambassadors throughout the month of September in an effort to build bridges, make an impact on their communities, engage in various cultural experiences, and strengthen their communication and diplomacy skills. TCA also arranged a meeting for Young Cultural Ambassadors with [Congresswoman Virginia Foxx \(R-NC/5th\)](#), Chairwoman of the Education and the Workforce Committee and Turkey Caucus Member, and her staff on September 13.

On October 28, 4th Annual Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress delegates attended the [Maryland American Turkish Association's](#) (MATA) Republic Day Gala at the Marriot Hotel in Greenbelt, MD. Maryland State Delegate Kriselda Valderrama (D-District 26) delivered keynote remarks at the event that was attended by leaders and members of the Turkish American community as well as friends of Turkey.

In the Community



Turkish Women's International Network's event, Sept 29.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy presenting Ceylan Ecer with TURKOFAMERICA Magazine's top '40 under 40' award.

Turkish American Legal Defense Fund

TCA established the [Turkish American Legal Defense Fund \(TALDF\)](#) in 2009 to protect and defend free speech, expression, assembly, and other constitutional or legal rights of Turkish Americans.

French Constitutional Council Reaffirms that Crimes Against Humanity or Genocide must be Established by Competent Courts not Legislature

On January 26, 2017, the Constitutional Council of France repealed a provision of the Law on Equality and Citizenship that aimed to criminalize speech that disputes genocides.

The amendment, contained in article 173 of the Law of Equality and Citizenship, had been stealthily inserted into the reform package late last year through efforts by the Armenian French lobby. However, the Constitutional Council repealed the amendment on grounds that it violated France's Law on the Freedom of Speech and Press and the French Constitution. The Council's decision described the amendment as an unnecessary and disproportionate attack against freedom of speech. The Council also reaffirmed its earlier decision that a crime against humanity or genocide must be established by a competent court, not by the legislature.

Armenian French organizations have long lobbied to criminalize what they consider genocide denial in order to stifle debate and inhibit scholarship on the Ottoman-Armenian tragedy that does not agree with their one-sided perspective. Their efforts have repeatedly been pushed back by the French high court.

In Congress

A significant component of TCA's mission is to enhance understanding of the importance of U.S.-Turkey relations in Congress.

Strengthening the Voice of Turkish Americans

TCA has made it a primary objective to strengthen the voice of Turkish Americans in public affairs. TCA works to monitor legislation and issues discussed in Congress that concern the Turkish American community. TCA also regularly provides information and analysis to members of Congress and their staff on issues related to Turkey and U.S.-Turkey relations through TCA issue papers sent via fax and email bulletins as well as through face-to-face meetings. In 2017, TCA published 5 TCA issue papers.

Supporting the Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans

Throughout the year, TCA works with the Turkish American community to increase the membership of the [Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans](#) (the Turkey Caucus). In 2017, the Turkey Caucus reached 144 members, representing 42 U.S. states and five territories. With members from both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, it was the third largest bicameral ethnic/national caucus in Congress.

In 2017, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th) stepped down from her role as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans following her appointment as Chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Rep. Foxx remains an active member of the Turkey Caucus.

Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st) was named the new Republican Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans along with Rep. Chabot also serves as Chairman of the [House Small Business Committee](#). TCA has been working closely with Rep. Chabot along with Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN/9th), Gerry Connolly (D-VA/11th), and Pete Sessions (R-TX/32nd).

TCA engaged members of the Turkey Caucus on several occasions throughout the year. It sponsored numerous events relating to the mission of the Turkey Caucus, including facilitating the participation of Turkey Caucus members in Turkish American events, hosting meetings with members of the Turkish American community, promoting the work of its individual members, and integrating such TCA programs as its scholarship program and Washington Summer Internship Program into the members' own constituent services.

TCA sponsored a roundtable discussion in Key Biscayne, Florida, on February 19 for members of the [Florida Turkish American Association](#) (FTAA) and Congressional Turkey Caucus member Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th). Congresswoman Foxx is a former Co-Chair of the Turkey Caucus and is the Chairwoman for the House Education and Workplace Committee in the 115th Congress.

TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and Turkish Americans in southern Florida met with Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL/27th) in Miami, Florida, on February 19, 2017. Discussion focused on U.S.-Turkish Syrian and terrorism issues. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen is the former Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and is currently the Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Members of the [Turkish American Cultural Society of Colorado](#) (TACSCO) hosted Congressional Turkey Caucus member Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO/6th) in Denver, Colorado, on February 21, 2017, for a roundtable discussion. TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy also participated. On March 8th,



Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL/27th) with the Florida Turkish American Community.



Congressman Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th) with TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Project Coordinators Liz Clark and Sezan McDaniel.



TASCO roundtable meeting with Congressman Mike Coffman.

TCA helped facilitate a video conference call between members of TACSCO and Congressman Coffman to discuss U.S.-Turkey relations, Turkey's role in Syria, and other issues important to the Turkish American community in Colorado. Rep. Coffman participated in the video conference call from his office in Washington with TACSCO member Dr. Erdal Ozkan, whereas six members of TACSCO took part in the video call from the congressman's district office in Aurora, Colorado. TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Project Coordinator Sezan McDaniel also took part in the call from the Washington office.

In April 2017, TCA attended events hosted by Turkish Americans from Dallas, Ft. Lauderdale, Houston, Pittsburgh, and the Washington DC Metropolitan Area in honor of Congressional Turkey Caucus Co-Chair Pete Sessions (R-TX/32nd) and Congressmen Ted Deutch (D-FL/22nd), Mike Doyle (D-PA/14th), and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th). During the events they discussed U.S.-Turkey relations and issues important to the Turkish American community.

On May 8th, the Turkish American community in southern Florida met with Congresswoman Lois Frankel (D-FL/21st) in West Palm Beach, FL to discuss U.S.-Turkey relations and issues important to Turkish Americans. TCA Project Coordinator Liz Clark represented TCA at the meeting.

In July 2017, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy participated in the National Republican Congressional Committee's summer meeting in Pennsylvania, where he was able to speak with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan (R-WI/1st). President McCurdy interacted with seven other Republican congressional members, including Reps. Kevin Brady (R-TX/8th); Barbara Comstock (R-VA/10th); Bill Johnson (R-OH/6th); Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th); Roger Marshall (R-KS/1st); Alex Mooney (R-WV/2nd); Steve Stivers (NRCC Chair, R-OH/15th); and Glenn Thompson (R-PA/5th). Further, McCurdy participated in Congresswoman Virginia Foxx's

In Congress

(R-NC/5th) Appalachian Retreat in North Carolina at the beginning of August, where Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY/2nd) was also a featured guest.

As part of TCA's Turkish American Women's Leadership Initiative, a delegation of five Turkish American women joined members of Congress and industry representatives at the Congressional Black Caucus PAC's (CBC) Annual Retreat in New York City from July 21-23, 2017. Nineteen Congressional Black Caucus members took part in the retreat as well as special guests House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD/5th) and Reps. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY/10th), Filemon Vela (D-TX/34th), and Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX/15th). Representatives from 75 companies and organizations also took part in the retreat.

The five Turkish American participants were Zelda Elcin of New York, NY; Emine Kasapoglu of Bloomington, NJ; Sezan McDaniel of Bethesda, MD; Ceylan Rowe of Northborough, MA; and Duygu Yigitsoy of New York, NY. Accompanying the delegation were TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Project Coordinator Liz Clark.

At the retreat, the women's delegation attended a reception with CBC members at the New York Stock Exchange; listened to policy panels and political discussions; attended a Broadway show; and took part in a brunch at the home of CBC PAC Chairman Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY/5th). News media representatives speaking on the policy panels included Joe Madison of Sirius XM Radio and Yamiche Alcindor of the New York Times. The delegation also had the opportunity to speak about the Turkish American community and the importance of getting involved politically with Minority Whip Hoyer, Rep. Nadler, and CBC members Reps. Anthony Brown (D-MD/4th), Lacy Clay (D-MO/1st), Val Demings (D-FL/10th), Alcee Hastings (D-FL/20th), Robin Kelly (D-IL/2nd), Gregory Meeks, and Terri Sewell (D-AL/7th).

Responding to TCA's call for outreach to elected officials, four Turkish Americans joined members of Congress and industry representatives in Chicago, IL at the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) PAC Chicago Retreat on October 20-21, 2017. Eleven Congressional Black Caucus members attended, including Assistant Democratic Leader Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC/6th), Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats Rep. Greg Meeks (D-NY/5th), Foreign Affairs Committee Member Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL/2nd), Turkey Caucus members Reps. GK Butterfield (D-NC/1st), Danny Davis (D-IL/7th), Hank Johnson (D-GA/4th), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI/14th), Stacey Plaskett (D-VA/AL), Bobby Rush (D-IL/1st), and Reps. Joyce Beatty (D-OH/3rd) and Gwen Moore (D-WI/4th). The four Turkish American participants were Cem Karsan, Elhan Orhon, Dr. Hande Ozdinler, and Hakan Akgun, all of Chicago, IL.

TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy participated in Congressman Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th) 1st Future Committee Retreat in Bluffton, South Carolina, December 15-17. Kinzinger represents Illinois's 16th congressional district and is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Congressional Caucus on U.S. Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.



House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD/5th) with the Turkish American women's delegation, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy, and TCA Project Coordinator Sezan McDaniel.



Representative Anthony Brown (D-MD/4th), member of the Armed Services Committee, with the Turkish American women's delegation.



Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL/2nd), member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, with the Turkish American women's delegation.



Congressional Turkey Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st) visited TCA on October 2 and met with President G. Lincoln McCurdy, Project Coordinators Liz Clark and Sezan McDaniel, and TCA fall interns.

In Congress



Representative Don Beyer (D-VA/8th), with TCA Project Coordinator Liz Clark and members of the Turkish American community from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area at a gathering in Oxford, MD, September 29 - October 1.



Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL/2nd) with Dr. Hande Ozdinler.



Representative James Clyburn (D-SC/6th) with Elhan Orhon.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and representatives from the Turkish American community with Representative Annie Kuster (D-NH/2nd), and with Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA/1st) at a fall foliage retreat in Bretton Woods, NH, September 22-24.

Support TCA

The Turkish Coalition of America is a U.S. tax exempt public charitable organization and your contributions are U.S. tax deductible. TCA is supported entirely by private donations. Checks can be mailed to: Turkish Coalition of America, 1510 H St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005.

Turkish Coalition of America

Washington, DC

1510 H St., NW, Ste. 900
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-370-1399
Fax: 202-370-1398

Boston

48 Jonas Brown Cir.
Concord, MA 01742
Phone: 978-318-0047
Fax: 978-318-0037

www.tc-america.org
www.facebook.com/TurkishCoalition
www.twitter.com/TCAmerica