

TURKISH COALITION *of* AMERICA

2018 ANNUAL REPORT





Contents

- 2** Executive Summary
- 3** Financial Statement
- 4** Educating the Public
- 5** Investing in Youth and Education
- 15** Building Bridges
- 20** In the Community
- 22** Turkish American Legal Defense Fund
- 23** 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 and interns from offices in Washington, DC and Boston.

TCA Leadership

DR. YALCIN AYASLI, Chairman
G. LINCOLN MCCURDY, President

TCA Staff

DR. NILSU GOREN, Program Director
LOUETTE RAGUSA, Operations Director
DAVID SALTZMAN, Legal Counsel
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Financial Statement

Turkish Coalition of America invested a total of **\$3,281,825.86** in 2018 to pursue its mission and implement its programs. The following is a categorized breakdown of all TCA administrative and program expenses.

\$145,402 ■ **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

- Education and Public Awareness Through Publication
- Turkish Coalition of America Website
- Travel to Speak with Community
- Community Outreach

\$275,267 ■ **YOUTH AND EDUCATION**

- Internships
- Scholarships
- Youth Congress
- University of Utah Turkish Studies Project

\$58,337 ■ **HERITAGE AND HUMANITARIAN GRANTS**

- UMD & ACBH – Supplemental Office Grant

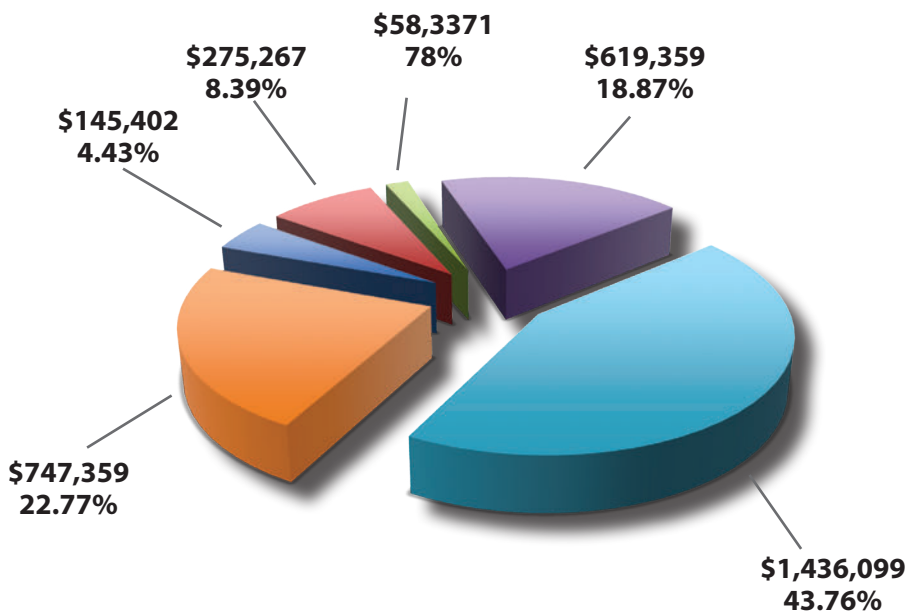
\$619,359 ■ **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Grassroots Grants
- Community Sponsorships

\$1,436,099 ■ **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- Turkish American Legal Defense Fund

\$747,359 ■ **ADMINISTRATIVE**



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 2018, 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 2018, 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 Summer 2018, TCA welcomed 9 young Turkish Americans from across the United States to participate in the Washington Summer Internship Program.

TCA 2018 Summer Internship Program participants worked at the following organizations: the American Turkish Council (ATC), the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the Middle East Institute (MEI), the American Turkish Association of Washington, D.C. (ATA-DC), the Turkish Heritage Organization (THO), and the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA).

As part of the Washington Summer Intern Program, TCA hosted the annual Summer Intern Orientation at its Washington, D.C. office on July 10. Interns gathered for a day of 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.

One of the highlights of their internship was meeting with Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st), a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on the U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.

Since the program's inception in 2007, TCA has provided a total of 187 internship opportunities to Turkish Americans and friends of Turkey.

“

My experience at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy this summer has been eye-opening on so many levels. This has been my first internship abroad, as most of mine were in Istanbul where I live, and being in the hub of politicians, change-makers, policy analysts, and professionals who work everyday to better the status quo, I wouldn't have had it any other way. I shaped my future goals and aspirations working in DC this summer, and I am very excited on what the future holds.

”

- *Maya Yalkin, 2018 Washington Summer Internship Program Participant*

Investing in Youth and Education



2018 TCA Washington Summer interns with Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st), a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on the U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.

“ My internship at the Middle East Institute this summer has been an invaluable experience for my professional development as I’ve written reports and summaries on various aspects of Turkish politics. I made many important career connections.

”

- Engin Polar, 2018 Washington Summer Internship Program Participant

“ I enjoyed the lunch with my congressional representative, John Garamendi. It was such a cool experience to be able to talk to and hear my representative speak on the issues about the defense industry, my district, NATO, and the US-Turkey relationship.

”

- Eren Yetkinler, 2018 TCA Washington Summer Intern



Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA/10th) with TCA Intern Eren Yetkinler.

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.

As in previous Congresses, the delegates were able to network and bond with their fellow Turkish Americans while hearing perspectives on the bilateral relationship between Turkey and the United States. They also engaged in active dialogue on the political systems in both countries and the current state of affairs in U.S.-Turkey relations. As for

Investing in Youth and Education

civic engagement, the delegates learned about constituents' involvement in policy-making and the fundamentals in being successful Turkish American advocates.

Since the program began in 2014, 132 Turkish Americans have attended the Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress. Applications for the Youth Congress open every year in July.

In 2018, between January 12-14, TCA President Lincoln McCurdy and Program Director Nilsu Goren participated in the Council of Turkish Canadians' (CTC) 10th Annual Turkish-Canadian Youth Congress in Montréal, Quebec, Canada. TCA also sponsored the travel of two Turkish American students, Ipek Duman and Pinar Gezgec, who presented on their experiences.



Delegates in front of the U.S. Capitol.

“ Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity! I was able to meet with amazing people and experience an unforgettable TCA Youth Congress and for that I very much appreciate all of your efforts. I hope to stay in contact with TCA and all of the people I met this past weekend. ”

- *Andrew Yildizlar, Greenwich, CT, 2018 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*

“ This Congress has truly been extremely inspiring and eye-opening for me; I hope to always continue the tie between Turkey and the US in all of my endeavors moving forward. I also want to thank you for giving me friends I will have for a lifetime as well as for arranging once in a lifetime experiences that I will never forget. ”

- *Banu Gulecyuz, Chicago, IL, 2018 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*

“ It was such a great opportunity for me to learn about the issues regarding U.S.-Turkey relations and how they are handled in the independent branches of our government. It was also a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow Turkish Americans. ”

- *Kyle Evren Donelson, Indianapolis, IN, 2018 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*



The delegates participate in a competition to test their knowledge of their own Congressmen in an intense battle.



Delegates saying farewell on the boat.



The delegates at the Turkish Ambassador's residence.

Investing in Youth and Education

TCA - UNIVERSITY OF UTAH TURKISH STUDIES PROJECT

In 2018, 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 Turkish Studies Project in 2018 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 had his PhD defense in November 2018.



Entrance to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

TURKISH STUDIES PROJECT 2018 ANNUAL ACTIVITY

Academic Publications:

Ottomans and Armenians (Edward Erickson) translated and published in Russian, 2018.

- This book presents that the Ottoman government developed an evolving, 35-year, empire-wide array of counterinsurgency practices that varied in scope and execution depending on the strategic importance of the affected provinces.

The Armenians Rebellion at Van (Justin McCarthy et al.) translated and published in Russian, 2018.

- This work presents an examination of Van from the 1870s to 1919. As the authors state, "The Armenian Revolt was an integral part of the great disaster that overcame the people of the Ottoman East. The slaughter of Muslims that accompanied the Armenian revolt in Van Province inexorably led first to Kurdish reprisals on the Armenians."

Sasun: The History of an 1890 Armenian Revolt. (Justin McCarthy) translation into Russian and publication. 2018

- The book is a serious, scholarly endeavor that is very useful for the scholars and public interested in Ottoman history, the Armenian problem and relations between different ethnic and religious groups.

Legislating Reality, Politicizing History: Contextualizing Armenian Claims of Genocide (Brendon Cannon) 2nd Edition. 2018

- This book demonstrates how the Armenian campaign to have the events of 1915 recognized as the Armenian Genocide remains the single bond possessing enough strength to bind the otherwise linguistic, geographically and religiously diverse Armenian Diaspora communities together.

Conferences:

Nationalism in the Caucuses (May 2018)

Turkish Diaspora in Europe (September 2018)

Fellowship Positions:

PERPARIM GUTAJ

Dissertation: Patterns of Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans

Ethnic cleansing is the policy and practice of systematic removal or elimination of an unwanted ethnic group, identity, and culture, from a specific territory. The purpose is to create an ethnically pure space, using various methods including genocide. What explains ethnic cleansing across space and over time? What is the role of societal actors in the process of ethnic cleansing? When and under what conditions ethnic cleansing becomes an option for state actors? Why do some ethnic cleansing campaigns succeed and others fail to attain ethnically pure spaces? Based on a multidimensional analysis of three different case-studies (time periods) from the Balkans region, between 1804 and 2004, I build a theory that describes and explains patterns - trends and behaviors - of ethnic cleansing and conditions under which ethnic groups, identities, and cultures are targeted with forced assimilation, deportation, and elimination. Methodologically, I carry out a comparative-historical research through the examination of documents recorded by governmental and non-governmental organizations, writings of elites, oral histories, and records from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Empirical evidence demonstrates that modern constructed religious and racial attitudes toward unwanted ethnic groups combined with the presence or absence of great power impartiality prevail over political, economic and security concerns in explaining patterns of ethnic cleansing. The study argues that when the unwanted ethnic group is deemed (i) a religious or racial, or (ii) a religious and racial threat to national and territorial integrity, and great power impartiality is upheld, the group generally is targeted with forced assimilation. When the unwanted ethnic group is deemed a religious or racial threat to national and territorial integrity, and great power impartiality is not upheld, the ethnic group generally is targeted with deportation. Finally, when the unwanted ethnic group is deemed a religious and racial threat to national and territorial integrity, and great power impartiality is not upheld, the group generally is targeted with elimination. These trends and behaviors of ethnic cleansing represent three different kinds of violence against unwanted ethnic groups, and are closely related with intentions and fantasies to dominate and rule over specific lands, spaces, and souls. While the study highlights the processes of state making and nation building through policies and practices of forced assimilation, deportation, and elimination, it develops context-sensitive patterns of ethnic cleansing and identifies the conditions under which a pattern is preferred upon the other, by looking at the contingencies of the international context, regional undercurrents, and domestic energies that produce opportunities to cleanse and kill.

HAKAN ERDOGAZ

Dissertation: Accommodation of Religious Diversity and States in Between Minorities and National Identity: Muslims in France and Russia.”

Why are some religious minorities seen as an existential threat and securitized by their state, while others turn out to be patriotic and loyal to their state? Why do states vary in their capability to incorporate Muslim minorities into national political community? The aim of this research is to examine how and why the dynamics of religious difference and national identity shape state policies toward the accommodation of minorities in secular, Christian-majority countries with large Muslim populations such as France and Russia. I argue that variation in accommodation of Muslim minorities and their incorporation into national political community are a result of unintended consequences of nation- and state building, collective memories of solidarity and violence, and globalization. To accomplish its objectives, this study adopts a multi-causal approach that accounts for the role of historical legacies on contemporary issues and those of globalization. This study argues that the varying degrees of Muslim incorporation into national political community in France and Russia can be explained by three main factors: different pathways to nation- and state-building, trajectories of collective memories that resulted from different types of colonialism, and the global diffusion of discourse over the meaning and implications of contemporary Islamic religiosity. I argue that definition of a thick national identity based on a nation-state model with collective memories of violence and racialization of Muslims combined with diffusing effects of global Islam produced a way of thinking that Islam is not compatible with French way of living. Conversely, definition of a thin national identity based on an empire-state building model with collective memories of violence and solidarity and recognition of Muslims combined with diffusing effects of global Islam produced a relatively more positive way of thinking that Islam is part of Russian national political community. I carry out a comparative historical research and employ critical juncture and path-dependency frameworks to examine these variables for each case and explain the varying degrees of state configuration of religious difference and national identity. Because my hypotheses are primarily non-quantifiable, I employ qualitative methods.

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 2018, 2 scholarships were awarded, bringing the total number of scholarships awarded to 489 since this program's inception in 2008. American minority students who receive the TCA Study Abroad Scholarship studied in International Relations and Global studies.

Scholarship recipients came from University of Texas, Austin, and Indiana University, Bloomington. They studied at Bogazici University in Istanbul, Turkey.



“

No other country in the world has as much history, culture, and fantastic food as Turkey does. If you want to immerse yourself into a fascinating cultural blend of East and West, Turkey should be your destination of choice!

I would like to thank TCA so much again for this incredible opportunity! When I return to IU next week and I begin to tell everyone about my experience I will make sure to mention TCA and the generous scholarships you offer.

”

- Matthew Hernandez, 2018 Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient

“

I fell madly in love with Turkey. I never in a million years expected to enjoy my time over there as much as I did. The food was amazing!! I miss eating gozleme so much. It is the best thing I have ever tasted. Bogazici is such an amazing and beautiful university. I loved my professors and learned so much about the history of Turkey. I became friends with several students. They would take me out to restaurants and events in order for me to get the full Turkish experience. I became really close friends with another student studying abroad in Turkey. She is originally from Turkey, but grew up in Canada most of her life. Lucky for me, she speaks perfect Turkish, which really came in handy when talking to the street vendors. I am being extremely sincere when I say it was the best time of my life. On the last day, I cried so much taking the taxi to the airport. I just did not want to leave. Walking to class everyday, and seeing that spectacular view of the Bosphorus Sea was just so amazing. I developed a daily routine and became close friends with students working at a coffee shop near the school entrance. Every time they saw me walking from a distance, they would have my order ready. Like I mentioned earlier, I went to Italy and France after Turkey. Lets just say that they did not even come close to Istanbul. I would constantly compare each city I passed by to Istanbul's authenticity and superiority. The city was just vibrant. I felt so alive being there. Everyone was extremely friendly towards me. I had no problems whatsoever. I can easily say that all I want to do now is go back to Istanbul. All my friends and family back here in the U.S. are already sick of me constantly talking about Istanbul's greatness. They just haven't experienced the city yet, but once they do, they, too, won't be able to stop talking about it.

Lastly, I wanted to thank you and the Turkish Coalition of America for helping me fund my trip to Istanbul. Without your help, I would not have been able to fall in love with Istanbul, much less experience memories that I will truly treasure for the rest of my life. Also, thank you for helping me create a friendship that will stay with me forever.

”

- *Valeria Osorio (right), 2018 Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient*



Building Bridges

MEETINGS WITH TURKISH AND AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

On January 23, TCA hosted a briefing for Turkish graduate students from Bahcesehir University's American Studies Program. TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and Program Director Nilsu Goren gave a presentation on TCA's programs and activities followed by a Q&A session on Turkish American civic engagement, the U.S. and Turkish political systems, and congressional caucuses.

On January 31, TCA Program Director Nilsu Goren moderated a panel discussion organized by the Turkish Heritage Organization titled "Regional Stability: U.S.-Turkey Strategic Alliance and Cooperation under NATO." The panel featured Gen. (Ret.) James T. Conway, the former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps and Major Gen. (Ret.) Ahmet Bertan Nogaylaroglu, the former Armed Forces Attaché at the Turkish Embassy.

On March 14, MEF University President Professor Muhammed Sahin and Director of Center for Excellence in Learning Teaching Caroline Fell Kurban visited the TCA office. TCA arranged for them to visit the office of Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, who chairs the House Education and The Work Force Committee.

On June 7, TCA hosted a reception for Santa Clara University alumni who traveled to Turkey through their Global Fellows Program and interned at the TCA/TCF offices in Istanbul.

On July 19, TCA hosted a delegation of Turkish students from the Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research (SETA). At the meeting, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Director Nilsu Goren briefed the delegation on TCA programs and activities, and the U.S. political system.

On August 17, TCA hosted a delegation of American students from University of California, Irvine, who participated to the "Olive Tree Initiative" Armenia-Turkey" study group this year. TCA Director Nilsu Goren briefed the delegation on TCA programs and activities. The group also held a roundtable discussion with members of the Turkish American community in Washington, D.C.

On October 18, TCA Director Nilsu Goren gave a seminar titled "The Origins of the Crisis in U.S.-Turkish Relations" at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.



SETA Delegation with TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Program Director Nilsu Goren.



Students at Ankara University Attend Briefing Hosted by TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy.

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.

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 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.

On May 5, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Director Louette Ragusa attended the Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina's (ACBH) gala in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the statehood of BiH. TCA was a silver sponsor of the event. President Bill Clinton was the keynote speaker of the gala, where he was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

On October 4, TCA Directors Nilsu Goren and Louette Ragusa attended a farewell reception hosted by the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) in honor of Macedonian Ambassador to US Vasko Naumovski's departure at the Embassy of Macedonia.

On October 12, Goren and Ragusa attended a reception hosted by the Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH) celebrating Bosnia and Herzegovina's Art and Culture at the Mansion on O Street Museum.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy with ACBIH President Ajla Delkic.



TCA Operations Director Louette Ragusa Attends Maryland American Turkish Association (MATA) with United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) Co-Founder and President Metodija Koloski.

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 2018, 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.

In January, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy travelled to Chicago to meet with the president of the Turkish American Cultural Alliance (TACA) Orhan Ulger and Cem Karsan, treasurer of the Turkish Coalition Midwest Political Action Committee (TC-Midwest PAC). McCurdy also met with Turkish Consul General Umut Acar.

On February 15, TCA hosted a roundtable discussion with Turkish Embassy Commercial Counselor Omur Demir Kizilarlan and representatives from the Ho Chunk Nation to explore investment opportunities for Turkish companies in Indian country.

On March 30, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and TCA Directors Louette Ragusa and Nilsu Goren attended a panel discussion titled "Women and the Future" and a reception organized by the [Turkish Philanthropy Funds](#) (TPF) and [Turkish Women's International Network](#) (TurkishWIN) in New York.

On April 17, Orhan Ulger, the President of the [Turkish American Cultural Alliance](#) (TACA) in Chicago visited TCA to discuss TACA's activities for the upcoming year.

On April 26, TCA hosted a farewell lunch for Ismet Korukoglu, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Representative in Washington, D.C. Korukoglu will continue to serve as the TRNC Representative in New York.

On June 19, TCA hosted a farewell meeting for Omur Demir Kizilarlan, now former Chief Commercial Counselor at the Embassy of Turkey, and held a roundtable discussion on US-Turkey commercial relations.

On August 29, TCA hosted an orientation and welcome reception for the 2018 ATA-DC Young Cultural Ambassadors Program with a group of high school students from DC-MD-VA metropolitan area. The purpose of the program is for the students to learn more about the Turkish culture, meet with members of the Turkish-American and international community, and enhance their communication and diplomacy skills. During the orientation, TCA Director Nilsu Goren briefed the students and parents on TCA programs and activities.

On September 8th, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended the American Turkish Association of Washington, DC's Festival Garden Party in support of the [16th Annual Turkish Festival](#), which took place on September 30, 2018 in Washington, D.C. TCA was a sponsor of the festival.

On October 27, the Youth Congress delegates attended the American Turkish Association of Washington, D.C.'s (ATA-DC) Republic Day Gala celebrating the 95th Annual Turkish Republic Day with members of the Turkish American community as well as friends of Turkey.



TCA's 2018 ATA-DC Young Cultural Ambassadors.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy presenting the Turk of America Award to Patsy Jones of ATA-DC.



Karamanoglu Farewell Party.



Youth Congress delegates at the ATA-DC Republic Day Gala.

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.

TALDF continued its mission this year to protect and defend free speech, expression, assembly and other constitutional or legal rights of Turkish Americans. Efforts included addressing deficiencies in proposed Massachusetts legislation that would amend the state's public school social science curriculum in ways that would mischaracterize Turkish history and negatively impact Turkish-Americans in that state. In California, TALDF analyzed the potential impact of proposed legislation that would treat Turkish investments in the state's public pension funds differently from investments from other nations.

The Fund provided a case analysis of a Turkish American in Los Angeles who was mistreated by a bank employee because of her national origin. They have also continued their investigation into a criminal conspiracy case that has targeted a prominent Turkish American. On an international level, TALDF produced commentary on an anti-Turkish decision by the Parliament of the Netherlands that stood in opposition to contemporary jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the domestic courts of France.

TALDF continued its engagement by addressing the Annual TCA Youth Congress, providing training on the American civil liberties framework and how to identify potential violations. TALDF has also compiled a summary of Turkish American civil liberties concerns to an author of upcoming scholarly work on education in ethnic communities. The Fund periodically addresses multiple threats to Turkish American civil society organizations conveyed by email as well.

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 bulletins as well as through face-to-face meetings.

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 2018, the Turkey Caucus had 136 members, representing 41 U.S. states and five territories.

TCA worked closely with the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans; Reps. Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st), 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.

In January, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy arranged meetings for the President of the Federation of International Consular Associations and Corps (FICAC) Aykut Eken of Istanbul with Congressmen Don Beyer Jr. (D-VA/8th) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th). FICAC was established in 1982 and represents honorary and career consuls worldwide.

On February 13, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended an event in Washington D.C., hosted by Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-MI/14th).

On February 15, TCA held a Turkish coffee hour with special guest Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX/32nd) and his senior staff. The congressman was introduced to Turkish delights and other traditions, including Turkish coffee fortune telling.

On February 28, TCA and the Turkish Heritage Organization (THO) hosted an art exhibition and reception on Capitol Hill featuring the profiles of Ahmet Ertegun and James Baldwin, and eleven paintings by Hulis Mavruk in honor of African American History Month.

Ertegun dedicated much of his career to promoting African American musicians while also fighting for racial equality. Prominent African American novelist Baldwin lived in Istanbul in the 1960s and 70s, and finished *Another Country* (1962) there. Mavruk specializes in portraying African American individuals and their cultures.

In Congress

In attendance were Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th), congressional staff, representatives from foreign embassies, and members of the African American and Turkish American communities.

March 3-4, TCA Directors Louette Ragusa and Nilsu Goren attended an event hosted by Congressman Alcee Hastings (D-FL/20th) with representatives from the Turkish American community in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

On March 27, TCA Director Louette Ragusa participated in a meeting with Congressman Mike Coffman (R-CO/6th) and the Turkish American community in Denver, Colorado.

On March 28, TCA Director Nilsu Goren and representatives of the Turkish American community in Northern Virginia attended an event with Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA/8th) in Washington, D.C.

On April 12 and 26, TCA Director Nilsu Goren attended two breakfast events organized by the Government Relations Association (GRA) with Congressman Ralph Norman (R-SC/5th) and Congressman Bruce Poliquin (R-ME/2nd) in Washington, D.C.

On May 9, TCA Director Nilsu Goren attended a breakfast event organized by the Government Relations Association (GRA) with Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st) in Washington, D.C. Congressman Chabot is a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on the U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.

On May 16, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended a breakfast hosted by Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN/9th). Congressman Cohen is a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on the U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.

On May 17, Goren attended a lunch organized by GRA with Congressman Donald Norcross (D-NJ/1st).

May 22, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy attended a lunch on Capitol Hill hosted by Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA/3rd).

May 24, McCurdy met privately with Congressman Garamendi and his staff to discuss the current state of US-Turkey relations.

On June 6, Goren attended an event hosted by Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC/2nd). Also in June, she attended various DCCC and NRCC events hosted by Democrat and Republican leadership. On June 7, she attended a GRA event with Congressman Brendan Boyle (D-PA/13th).

On June 20, TCA Director Nilsu Goren attended a breakfast event organized by the Government Relations Association (GRA) with Congressman Salud Carbajal (D-CA/24th).



Congressman Pete Sessions at TCA Headquarters.



From left to right: THO President Ali Cinar, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, Hulis Mavruk, and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy.



Congressman Coffman with the Turkish American Community in Denver, Colorado.

In Congress

On June 26, TCA Directors Louette Ragusa and Nilsu Goren attended an event with Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL/20th) in Washington, D.C.

On July 12, TCA Director Nilsu Goren attended a breakfast event organized by the Government Relations Association (GRA) with Congressman Brendan Boyle (D-PA/1st).

On July 24, TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy, TCA Director Nilsu Goren, and TCA Summer Internship Program participant Eren Yetkinler attended a lunch hosted by Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA/3rd). Eren attends University of California, Davis, which is in the Congressman's district.

On July 24, Goren attended a GRA breakfast event with Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA/8th).

On September 4, McCurdy, TCA Directors Nilsu Goren and Louette Ragusa attended a reception with Congressman Mike Turner (R-OH/10th) in Washington, D.C.

On September 13, Goren attended a reception with Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX/32nd), who is a Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on the U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans. The reception was attended by Congressman Steve Scalise (R-LA/1st), House of Representatives Majority Whip.

Between September 28-29, McCurdy met with Congresswoman Annie Kuster (D-NH/2nd) at an event in Whitfield, New Hampshire. Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA/1st), who is the Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee, also attended the event.

On September 12, TCA Director Nilsu Goren accompanied the American Turkish Association of Washington, DC's (ATA-DC) Young Cultural Ambassadors to a meeting with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th), who is the Chairwoman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

Throughout November, TCA Program Director Nilsu Goren attended various events organized by the Government Relations Association (GRA), political briefings and post-midterm election events organized by the DCCC and NRCC with newly elected members of Congress.

On November 13, Goren attended a lunch meeting with Congressman-elect Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA/14th) at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney.

On November 27, she attended a breakfast event with Congresswoman-elect Madeleine Dean (D-PA/4th).

On November 28, Goren attended a GRA breakfast event with Congressman Dave Loebsack (D-IA/2nd) and a lunch event with Congressman Matt Gaetz (R-FL/1st) at the Livingston Group.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy receiving the Gusi International Peace Prize.



Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA/3rd) with TCA intern Eren Yetkinler, Program Director Nilsu Goren, and President G. Lincoln McCurdy.

In Congress

On November 29, she attended a lunch event with Congressman Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th) with the Turkish American and Syrian American community representatives.

In December 2018, TCA Operations Director Louette Ragusa attended holiday events with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th), Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX/32nd), Congressman Adam Kinzinger (R-IL/16th), and members of the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington, D.C.

On December 3, TCA Program Director Nilsu Goren attended an event with Congressman-elect Dan Crenshaw (R-TX/2nd) on Capitol Hill.

On December 10, 2018, Hon. Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN/9th) made a statement in the United States House of Representatives recognizing TCA and its President G. Lincoln McCurdy for receiving the 2018 Gusi Peace Prize. The statement can be accessed [here](#). Congressman Cohen is a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans.

G. Lincoln McCurdy, President of the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA), was one of the fifteen 2018 laureates from 13 countries receiving the [Gusi International Peace Prize](#) at its 17th annual awards ceremony on November 28 in Manila, Philippines. The Gusi Peace Prize, established in 2002, is Asia's foremost award that recognizes individuals and organizations working toward the attainment of peace and respect for human life and dignity.



Congressman Adam Kinzinger with FICAC President Aykut Eken and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy.



TCA Hosts Grassroots Meet & Greet for Jesse Colvin, Candidate for Maryland First Congressional District.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy meets Michael Eggman, Candidate for California's 10th Congressional District.

In Congress



Young Cultural Ambassadors Visit Library of Congress.



TCA Program Director Nilsu Goren and the Young Cultural Ambassadors with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy with Congressman Steve Stivers (R-OH/15th).

Support TCA

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