

TURKISH COALITION *of* AMERICA

Fostering Understanding of Turkish American Issues Through Public Education



2012 Annual Report

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Executive Summary



Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) was founded in 2007 as an educational, charitable organization and works 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 Boston, Washington, DC and Istanbul.

TCA Leadership

YALCIN AYASLI, *Chairman*

G. LINCOLN MCCURDY, *President*

GULER KOKNAR, *Vice President*

BASAK KIZILDEMIR, *Vice President, Turkey Representative*

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

Financial Statement

Turkish Coalition of America invested \$2,072,695 in 2012 to pursue its mission and programs. The following is a breakdown of all TCA administrative and program expenses:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PUBLIC EDUCATION - Educational Awareness through printed materials - Media and Public Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$349,178.05 \$97,224.56 \$212,901.42
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOUTH AND EDUCATION - Internships - Scholarships - University of Utah Program - Study Tour Grants - Individual institutional Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$480,584.90 \$99,738.90 \$185,500.00 \$173,846.00 \$11,500.00 \$10,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HERITAGE AND HUMANITARIAN GRANTS - ACBH - UMD & ACBH – Supplemental office grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$67,384.08 \$25,995.00 \$41,389.08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - Council of Turkish Canadians - Grassroots Grants - Conference Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$71,443.44 \$5,000.00 \$57,987.24 \$8,456.20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$282,953.12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPECIAL PROJECTS - Web design - Individual Institutions/Sponsorships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$25,348.80 \$10,348.80 \$15,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADMINISTRATIVE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$795,802.88

2012 TOTAL: \$2,072,695



Educating the Public

TCA contributes to the accurate portrayal of Turkish Americans and Turkey through a proactive media strategy.



Year round, TCA's professional team monitors American media and engages with journalists both through face-to-face meetings and by providing background information and fact sheets on current issues.

TCA officers and experts are regularly featured in electronic and print media on issues of concern to Turkish Americans. Periodically, **TCA Issue Papers** are sent to members of Congress. In 2012, TCA issued 28 Issue Papers and statements that provided information and analysis on current affairs related to Turkey and amplified the position of TCA on relevant issues.

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 a comprehensive resource and reading list on Turkey. In 2012, the TCA website received over 515,500 visitors.

TCA received consistent coverage in U.S. media outlets in 2012, and was the primary reference for reporters to consult for a Turkish American perspective. TCA was quoted or featured in The Washington Post, Reuters, Roll Call, The Hill, National Journal, Voice of America, BuzzFeed, Eurasia Review, International Policy Digest, Indian Country Today, and other publications throughout the U.S., Turkey, and the world.

TCA also held numerous background meetings with senior reporters, editors, and contributors from some of the world's largest and most prestigious publications and news agencies, including The New York Times, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg Businessweek, Associated Press, The Atlantic, The Hill, and The Washington Times.

In 2012, TCA continued its robust social media campaign to expand its presence online. In the last year, the videos on TCA's YouTube page have received more than 55,000 viewings and its Twitter and Facebook profiles reached thousands of people.

Investing in Youth and Education



To enhance Turkish American participation in public affairs and to cultivate future generations of Turkish American leaders, TCA is proud to offer two signature youth programs.

TCA Washington Summer Internship Program

The **TCA Washington Summer Internship Program** provides an opportunity for Turkish American college and graduate students to work in Washington, DC in Congressional offices or select governmental and non-governmental organizations. This program is designed to enhance the participation of young Turkish Americans in political life and contribute to the preparation of future Turkish American political leaders.

In 2012, 19 Turkish American students participated in the Washington Summer Internship Program. These young Turkish Americans benefitted from experiencing firsthand how Washington works and were great ambassadors for the Turkish American community on Capitol Hill and in the surrounding policy community.

In 2012, TCA interns were given the opportunity to work in the offices of Congresspersons Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), Joe Wilson (R-SC), Mary Bono Mack (R-CA), Steve Rothman (D-NJ), Robert Aderholt (R-AL), William Macy Clay (D-MO), Tom Price (R-GA), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Steven Cohen (D-TN), Ed Whitfield (R- KY), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), and Yvette Clarke (D-NY), and at several non-profit organizations in the nation's capital.

A total of **97 Turkish American students** have received internships under the TCA Washington Summer Internship Program since its inception in 2007.

TCA Advance & Robert C. Byrd Scholarship Programs

The **TCA Advance Scholarship Program** offers a \$5,000 annually renewable scholarship to Turkish American students who aspire to a career in public service, public relations, law, or the media. Awarded to graduating high school seniors and college and graduate students, the TCA Advance Scholarship aims to recognize the academic achievements and leadership role of young Turkish Americans and to cultivate a new generation of leaders in our community.

Since the program's inception in 2007, TCA has granted **113 scholarships to 70 Turkish Americans**. TCA Advance scholars hail from leading U.S. colleges and stand out not only for their scholastic and personal achievements but also for their dedication to their heritage and to community service.

Turkish Americans attending prestigious schools from across the United States competed for the TCA Advance scholarship in 2012. Ten new TCA Advance

"This past summer working with the TCA 2012 Washington Summer Internship Program was one of the most enriching and eye-opening experiences of my life. I was able to see firsthand how our government's legislative body is run...More importantly, I learned how important it is to be a politically involved citizen and how we need to make our voices heard if we want real change and progress to happen." **Natalia Semrin Aleckson, 2012 TCA Washington Summer Intern, Aliso Viejo, CA, Congressman Tom Price**

"I am truly grateful to TCA for providing me with this wonderful opportunity to intern on Capitol Hill. It was amazing to see the impact Turkish Americans have made in Congress by raising awareness of the large and continuously growing Turkish community within the United States. The experiences I've had in Washington will be memories I will treasure." **Nina Turk, 2012 TCA Washington Summer Intern, San Clemente, CA, Congressman Adam Kinzinger**

"My experience at TCA taught me a lot about what it means to be an advocate in my own community and beyond. It opened my eyes to the world of public service, giving me an inside look at the political process on Capitol Hill. From think tanks to meetings with congressional delegates, this experience had a huge impact on my knowledge of how policies are formed. Now that I have finished my internship, I have a better understanding of what to do in order to have my voice heard and be an engaged citizen." **Deniz Cakiraga, 2012 TCA Washington Summer Intern, Nashua, NH, American Friends of Turkey**

Investing in Youth and Education

"My involvement within the Turkish Community - particularly with TCA - has brought me closer to my Turkish heritage and made me feel even more connected to Turkey than I have ever been before. This is not just an annual check for me, this is a commitment to do whatever I can to promote Turkey and U.S.-Turkey relations as well as a way to bring myself closer to my Turkish American identity."

Natalia Semrin Aleckson, George Mason University, BA Candidate in Global Affairs

"As a woman of Turkish descent, I am honored to receive the TCAdvance Scholarship in the name of Senator Byrd. He championed issues with great conviction and gave Turkish Americans a powerful voice."

Zelda Elvan Elcin, University of Minnesota Law School, JD Candidate

"Through the TCAdvance Byrd scholarship I hope to educate my peers at Princeton University about Turkey and the significance of the U.S.-Turkey relationship, particularly because many of them will go on to pursue careers in the U.S. government. I am especially thrilled to be receiving a scholarship in honor of Senator Byrd, who recognized the importance of cultivating a comprehensive U.S. policy toward Turkey."

Daphne McCurdy, Princeton University, MPA Candidate in Public Affairs

Scholarships were awarded and the scholarships of five students were renewed for a second year, totaling 15 TCAdvance scholarships in 2012.

2012 also marked the second year of the **TCAdvance - Robert C. Byrd Memorial Scholarship**, established to honor the legacy of West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd. The Byrd Scholarship program was launched with the blessing of Senator Byrd's family to support Turkish American students hailing from the 13 states of the Appalachian region. The scholarship honors the late Senator's lifelong dedication to civil service and his commitment to building a strong U.S.-Turkey relationship. **Zelda Elvan Elcin of New York**, a first-year law student at the University of Minnesota Law School, and **Daphne Alberta McCurdy of Virginia**, a first-year master's student at Princeton, were selected by TCA as the 2012 Robert C. Byrd Memorial Scholars.

TCA Academic Grants

In 2012, TCA awarded several grants, some of which were new and others a continuation of grants offered in prior years, to promising scholars and researchers whose work TCA deemed particularly valuable to the advancement of knowledge about Turkey, its people, and their history, politics, and culture.

In April 2012, Peter Lang Publishers released the book *The Transnational Turn in American Studies*, edited by Tanfer Emin Tunc and Bahar Gursel and partially underwritten by a grant from TCA. The publication seeks to initiate transnational dialogue between Turkey and the United States by examining American Studies from a Turkish perspective and highlighting Turkish contributions to American culture.

In October 2012, TCA provided a grant to Justin McCarthy, Professor of History at the University of Louisville, to support the publication of an **annotated map** on the 100th anniversary of the Balkan Wars. The map displays the geography of atrocities committed during the Balkan Wars, including the forced exile or death of approximately 1.5 million Muslims from Ottoman Europe. The map was translated into Bosnian and republished by the University of Sarajevo, and was widely distributed by TCA.

TCA-University of Utah Turkish Studies Project

TCA provided a major **multi-year grant** to the University of Utah in 2009 to establish a new academic program on late-Ottoman/Turkish studies, with particular focus on the origins of modern ethnic cleansing, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of nation states in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Under the leadership of its Director, Dr. Hakan Yavuz, the program's goal is to advance scholarship on a critical period in a region that remains politically unsettled, in part due to the turbulent forces unleashed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The program also explores the shaping of modern Turkish identity through scholarly work, conferences, community participation, and support for new research, much of which focuses on a series of traumatic and formative events including crises in the Balkans and the Caucasus, the loss of major territories, and forced migration that predated the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

In 2010-11, the TCA grant helped the publication of *War & Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the Treaty of Berlin*, a 600-page book which is the collections of conference proceedings organized by the Turkish Studies

Investing in Youth and Education

Project in 2010 on the Treaty of Berlin. A second book, *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and Their Sociopolitical Implications* - a compilation of conference papers delivered in May 2011 at the University of Utah - is due for publication in June 2013 also thanks to support from TCA.

In May 2012, the Turkish Studies Project organized a conference entitled “The Ottoman Empire and World War I”, which was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina with the participation of 74 scholars from different parts of the world. In 2012, planning also began for a May 2013 conference in Tblisi, Georgia on the role of religion in the nation-building projects of the Caucasus and the Balkans.

In 2011- 2012, the Turkish Studies Project continued to provide fellowships to several graduate students, including its first post-graduate scholar whose master’s thesis focused on the ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Ottoman Muslims from the Balkans.



(T) 2012 TCA Advance Scholars come together at TCA for a day of orientation.

Building Bridges

TCA has established a diverse array of scholarship programs that support its educational mission.



"I am looking forward to studying abroad in Turkey, and TCA's contribution will have a significant impact in helping me achieve my goal of learning Turkish. Therefore, I applaud your efforts to help students like myself visit Turkey and learn more about its culture and language." **Olga Calderon, University of Arkansas at Little Rock – TOMER**

"I am thoroughly enjoying my time here in Turkey. Istanbul is much more than I could have imagined! This trip is most definitely life-altering." **Chuquandra Farley, Valdosta State University – Yeditepe University**

"I would like to thank TCA for helping me study abroad in Turkey. It was a life-changing experience, and I will always remember my visit to Turkey. I will definitely encourage others to visit Turkey, and I already have plans to return in the future." **Carmen Saras, Valdosta State University – Yeditepe University**

SCHOLARSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

TCA Minority Scholarship Programs

The TCA **Study Abroad in Turkey Scholarship Program for Minority Students** offers up to 100 scholarships per calendar year to **African American, Hispanic American** and **Native American** college and graduate students who have been accepted to a study abroad program in Turkey, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, or Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2012, **68 scholarships** were awarded, bringing the total number of Study Abroad scholarships awarded by TCA since 2008 to **249**. American minority students who received the TCA Minority Student Scholarship studied in Turkey in subject areas ranging from engineering to studio arts. The most common Turkish institutions chosen by the students for their study abroad program were Bogazici, Bahcesehir, and Koc Universities in Istanbul.

TCA's **Study Abroad in Turkey Scholarship Program for Armenian American Students** entered its third year in 2012. Established in 2010, the program also offers up to 100 scholarships per year to Armenian American college and graduate students who have been accepted to a study abroad program in Turkey or the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The program aims to encourage exchanges between Turks and Armenians and has awarded **6 scholarships** since its inception.

TCA continued its efforts to create academic bridges between Turkish Universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). As a result of TCA efforts to cultivate such ties, several Turkish universities are now offering full or partial scholarships to American minority students. In 2012, **3 students** took advantage of **Bahcesehir University's** tuition scholarship program for African American, Hispanic American, and Native American students. Using these scholarships, Jenise Araujo, Josie Anne Green, and Ada Vargas were able to study telecommunications, graphic communications and political science, respectively, at Bahcesehir. Since the inception of TCA's collaboration with Bahcesehir University, a total of **12 students** have received these scholarships. Additionally, the first recipient of the 10 comprehensive scholarships (tuition, room, monthly stipend) offered by **Istanbul Technical University (ITU)** to Native American students was also selected in 2012. Heidi Brandow, a senior Studio Arts major at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), spent a semester studying at ITU using this scholarship.

Building Bridges

In 2012, TCA also awarded its second scholarship through the **TCA-ACBH Scholarship to Turkey Program**. In an effort to explore the historical and cultural links between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina, TCA, in partnership with the Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH), offers up to 10 scholarships per year for Bosnian-American students to participate in study abroad programs in Turkey.

"I want to thank TCA for this funding. It made a huge difference to my students. They had such a great learning experience in Turkey." **Dr. Elizabeth Davis, George Washington University**

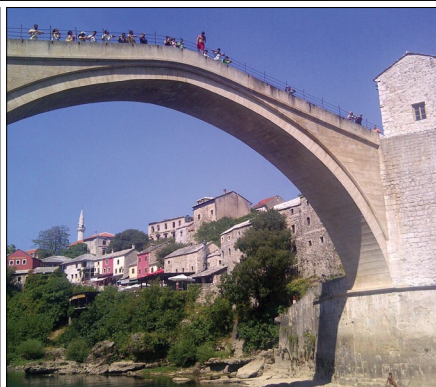
TCA Study Tour Grant Program

In January 2011, TCA established a new **grant program** that supports college study tours to Turkey. Designed to encourage more American educational institutions to choose Turkey as a study tour destination, TCA's grant helps subsidize student participation costs in such tours. Now in its second year, the TCA Study Tour Grants were awarded to George Washington University, the Community College of Philadelphia, Syracuse University, and Alfred University in 2012.

"Turkey is a wonderful country and Istanbul is one of the most magnificent cities I have ever visited. The layers of history and architecture that it carries is truly mind-blowing. I am impressed by all the sites I have visited and enjoyed drawing all of them, particularly the Hagia Sophia. I can still remember the first time I walked into the space. I paused for a minute just to admire its greatness and the intelligence of the people who built it. As I was drawing it I was even more amazed because the history it holds started to show in the drawings. It was truly an amazing building." **Pongpon Punyanaramitdee, Syracuse University, East Meets West Tour Participant**

Heritage Partnerships

To highlight the historical heritage and contemporary bonds of friendship that the Turkish people have with their neighbors and kin, TCA has established special **partnerships** with the Bosniak and Macedonian communities in the United States. TCA has provided multi-year grants to the Advisory Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH) and to the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD). These grants were designed as matching donations, offering up to



(T) March 2012 Congressional delegation participants in front of the Church of St. John Kaneo at Lake Ohrid, Macedonia as part of the Turkey-Macedonia delegation.

(L) Syracuse University Architecture Program Study Tour to Turkey grant recipients pose on an ancient piece of architecture in Istanbul.

(R) August 2012 Congressional delegation participants crossing the bridge in Mostar as part of the Turkey-Bosnia and Herzegovina delegation.

Building Bridges

\$150,000 to match private donations collected by the two groups. With the grants, TCA helped support the organizational capacity of these national Bosnian and Macedonian organizations and their efforts to establish their communities' voices in the nation's capital. The final funds under this program were awarded to ACBH in 2012.

The **TCA grants** to UMD and ACBH helped these two national Bosnian and Macedonian organizations hire professional staff, institute new programs and events, and build their membership and donor base.

TCA's grant enabled UMD to become the most influential voice for Macedonian Americans in the U.S. as its membership grew from tens to about 300. UMD also organized two global conferences in Washington, DC and Toronto, Canada, and has held advocacy days on Capitol Hill that have brought together 150-200 Macedonian Americans in support of U.S.-Macedonia relations.

Similarly, TCA's matching grant to ACBH has allowed the organization to gain visibility by augmenting the funds raised in the Bosnian American community. ACBH was also able to expand the Congressional Caucus on Bosnia to 26 members, while organizing high profile events on Capitol Hill to highlight issues important to the Bosnian American community.

TCA also supported the Bosnian and Macedonian American communities by once again extending the itineraries of the TCA congressional delegations to Turkey to include visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia in 2012. Sponsored by TCA, a delegation of 14 senior staffers visited Macedonia in March 2012 and a delegation of 12 senior House and Senate staffers visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in August 2012.

As a result of the many joint programs and the partnership spirit developed among Turkish, Macedonian, and Bosnian Americans over the years, UMD and ACBH also decided to move their offices to the new TCA headquarters in Washington, DC.

TCA - Native American Relations

TCA's Native American Outreach, which began by designating Native Americans as eligible to receive scholarships under the **TCA Minority Scholarship Program**, continued to expand in 2012. The many special projects that were spearheaded by TCA to help expand opportunities for Native Americans and foster ties between Indian Country, Turkish Americans, and Turkey culminated in the introduction of the **Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act (H.R. 2362)** in the U.S. House of Representatives. Introduced by Congressman Tom Cole, H.R. 2362 aimed to implement an innovative pilot project that would update antiquated land-leasing practices in Indian Country by facilitating trade and investment with Turkey and other World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries. Despite securing strong bipartisan support (58% (222) of the members present voted in favor of the bill), H.R. 2362 failed to meet the two-thirds majority required to pass under suspension vote.

TCA also spearheaded an **Infrastructure Development Initiative** with Istanbul Technical University in Turkey that explored areas for collaboration between Turkish companies and tribes, especially in the fields of engineering, architecture, management, and mining.

In February, TCA, along with an official Turkish delegation led by Deputy Undersecretary for Economy Cemalettin Damlaci, participated in the

Building Bridges



Reservation Economic Summit (RES 2012) for the second consecutive year. This was also the first time that a Turkish ambassador was at the event, with H.E. Namik Tan attending and representing Turkey.

TCA continued to promote its scholarships for Native American students by collaborating with like-minded programs such as the Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) at American University and the NANA Development Corporation in Alaska.

TCA president G. Lincoln McCurdy addressed the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) board in California on joint TCA-NAIHC projects and attended the 69th National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention Gala dinner in Sacramento, CA along with Tolga Arslan, Vice Consul of the Republic of Turkey.

In November, TCA and the Turkish Embassy co-organized the second Native American heritage month with support from NCAI, NAIHC, and the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD). In attendance at the event were leaders from a variety of Native American and Turkish organizations as well as ambassadors, diplomats and Congressional staff.

Later, TCA led a group of Native American representatives and tribal attorneys to Istanbul on a Business Exploration Trip from December 16-20, 2012. The trip was designed to focus on Turkey's leather and textile industries in order to create mutually beneficial business development opportunities between Indian Country and Turkey.

In the Community

Since its founding, TCA has supported Turkish American and Turkish Canadian organizations in their efforts to strengthen the Turkish voice in North America through education and civic participation.



“The 2012 ATAA Conference was co-organized by several Turkish American organizations (FTAA, TACC), and TCA and was therefore successful in reaching a broader audience. Additionally, the 2012 NLC sent a very strong message to the community that organizations could work together to achieve common goals. There is no doubt that these 2012 conferences have engendered tremendous growth in cooperation, mutual trust, and goodwill among Turkish American organizations... and that pleases me more than anything.”

Ergun Kirlikovali, President, Assembly of Turkish American Associations

“The American Friends of Turkey is grateful for the continuing support of TCA during the early months of this year, as we finished the two-year grant it gave us. The work that TCA has accomplished over the past few years is astonishing. TCA has been the catalyst for bringing together all elements of the Turkish American community and groups such as ours that work to support and strengthen people-to-people relations between Turkey and America. We are grateful for our close ties with TCA, and we admire and appreciate what TCA is accomplishing with both Turkish and American communities.”

Dr. Elizabeth W. Shelton, Executive Director, American Friends of Turkey

Supporting Community Growth and Civic Contributions

In 2012, TCA continued to support the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA). TCA provided \$16,487 to ATAA in support of the ATAA grassroots education programs, as well as a \$10,000 grant to sponsor the ATAA National Leadership Conference (NLC) in Washington, DC in April 2012. Over 300 Turkish Americans from across the United States participated in the conference, which also included a Turkish American Youth Day.

TCA also provided support for the second year in a row to the Council of Turkish Canadians (CTC) with a grant for \$5,000 to underwrite the organization’s 5th Annual Turkish Canadian Youth Congress in Ottawa in 2012.

TCA also provided a second-year grant in the amount of \$41,500 to American Friends of Turkey (AFOT). AFOT is one of the oldest civic organizations in the United States and was established by former American diplomats and military officers to support U.S.-Turkey relations. TCA grants to AFOT were aimed at supporting the institutional growth and programs of the organization by providing funding for a professional staff and instituting a speakers program under AFOT. With help from the TCA grant, AFOT started an individual membership program that resulted in 200 new members with its first drive; organized cultural lectures and adult education programs in Washington, DC and for the first time around the United States, reaching nearly 10,000 participants; and took its first educational travel tour to Turkey.

In Congress



One of the important missions of the Turkish Coalition of America is to enhance understanding in Congress about the importance of U.S.-Turkey relations.

ATAA Past President Gunay Evinch, Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-Ken.), Rep. Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), Rep. David Rivera (R-Fla.), Ambassador Namik Tan, and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy

Strengthening the Voice of Turkish Americans

TCA works to strengthen the voice of Turkish Americans by monitoring legislation that concerns the community and activating the [TCA Action Alert Center](#) to prompt Turkish Americans to contact their members of Congress, when necessary.

The TCA Action Alert Center is also made available free of charge to Turkish American organizations and partners of TCA. TCA regularly provides information and analysis to members of Congress and their staff through [TCA issue papers](#) sent via fax and e-mail bulletins as well as through face-to-face meetings. In 2012, 28 TCA Issue Papers covering important issues related to Turkey and U.S.-Turkey relations were published.

Supporting the Turkey Caucus

TCA has made it one of its prime objectives for the Turkish American community to increase the membership of the [Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans](#).

The hitherto unpublished membership of the Turkey Caucus was made public by TCA in 2007, and its membership reached a historical high of 157 in 2012 - over one quarter of the House of Representatives - representing 45 U.S. states and all six territories.

TCA has engaged members of the Turkey Caucus in many ways. It has sponsored numerous events relating to the mission of the Turkey Caucus, including commemorating the establishment of the caucus, facilitating the participation of Turkey Caucus members in Turkish American events, promoting the work of its individual members, and integrating such TCA programs as its minority scholarships into the members' own constituent services. In March 2012, TCA launched the quarterly bulletin prepared specifically for members of the Turkey Caucus, to provide periodic updates on TCA programs, the U.S.-Turkey relationship, and issues of concern to the Turkish American community.

To mark the 60th anniversary of Turkey's NATO membership, TCA and the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) [hosted](#) 12 members of Congress; Turkey's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Namik Tan; and dozens of Congressional staffers at a breakfast reception in 2012.

Delegation Visits

TCA has organized and worked with other organizations to sponsor 15 congressional delegations to Turkey, totaling 155 participants.



(T) TCA-sponsored February 2012 delegation led by former Congressman Frank Guinta in front of Anitkabir.

(L) TCA-sponsored August 2012 delegation to Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina in front of the Atatürk statue at Gallipoli.

(R) May 2012 Congressional delegation at Bahcesehir University.



“TCA is the United Macedonian Diaspora’s most important partner given its past and current support, especially the opportunity to bring senior Congressional staffers to Macedonia. The March 2012 trip was an excellent opportunity to showcase the country, its aspirations for NATO, and the relationship between the U.S., Macedonia, and Turkey. Staffers met high-level officials in the country including the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Defense Ministers. The level of attention displayed by Macedonian leaders we believe shows the importance they place on the U.S.-Macedonia-Turkey friendship.”
Metodija A. Koloski, President, United Macedonian Diaspora

“The Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH) is very grateful to TCA for taking U.S. Congressional staff to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The 2012 trip was the second TCA/ACBH trip to BiH, and with TCA’s generous help, we have been able to take 35 Congressional staffers to BiH thus far. The trip enabled staffers to learn more about BiH and the importance of continued U.S. engagement, and it also brought to light Turkey’s involvement in fostering peace and economic development in the Southeast Europe region.”
Admir Serifovic, President, Advisory Council for Bosnia & Herzegovina

Congressional Delegations to Turkey

TCA was recognized by Roll Call as the fourth largest sponsor of Congressional travel in 2012 for members of Congress and staff. As of 2012, TCA has organized and worked with other organizations to sponsor 15 congressional delegations to Turkey, totaling 155 participants.

The first **Congressional delegation of 2012** took place in February and was led by former Congressman Frank Guinta (R-NH). The itinerary included several high-level meetings in Ankara and Istanbul. To commemorate the 60th anniversary of Turkey’s NATO membership, the delegation participated in a meeting discussing NATO and U.S.-Turkey international security cooperation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans. This meeting was in Istanbul and moderated by the Global Relations Forum.

In March 2012, TCA took a **bipartisan delegation** of 12 senior staffers to Turkey and Macedonia. The group learned how both countries are collaborating to facilitate the Macedonian government’s implementation of the Ohrid Framework and foster long-term peace and stability in the country. In visiting Bitola and Ohrid, the delegation was exposed to Turkey’s deep historical and cultural ties to Macedonia and the Balkan region as a whole.

In May 2012, TCA took four senior staffers to Turkey. Their itinerary included meetings with business executives, leaders of the non-profit community, government officials, academics, and minority religious leaders during their visits to Istanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, and Patara, the birthplace of federalism and an inspiration for the US constitution. While in Istanbul, the delegation also attended Bahcesehir University’s Global Leadership Conference.

Delegation Visits

August 2012 marked the conclusion of the 15th Congressional trip sponsored by TCA to Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The delegation of 12 senior Senate and House staffers learned of the need for continued American and Turkish support for peace and stability in the Balkans. In Bosnia, delegates visited both Mostar - the famous cultural bridge of the Balkans - and Sarajevo - the capital. The delegation also participated in high-level meetings with President Bakir Izetbegovic, officials from the U.S. and Turkish Embassies, and the International Commission on Missing Persons. The group was also briefed on the then upcoming 100th anniversary of the start of the Balkan Wars. During the visit to Istanbul, the delegates discussed the influx of refugees from Syria with local NGO leaders, religious freedom with religious minority community members, and the Arab Spring.

"The trip illustrated to me the importance of the U.S.-Turkey relationship and the need to work together for our common good as I began to understand the geopolitical importance of the area from early history up to modern times. It was also amazing to see the diversity of the country and its people." **Elaine Acevedo, Legislative Director, Congresswoman Renee Ellmers (R-NC)**

"I knew Turkey was an important American ally and regional power; however, I was mostly illiterate when it came to its cultural, religious, and historical significance until traveling there in 2012. Every day spent in Turkey was a revelation. What a profound experience - one that I will not soon forget. My deep gratitude to TCA for helping to open my eyes." **Justin Harding, Chief of Staff, Congressman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)**

State Attorneys General Delegations

In June 2012, TCA **hosted** the first delegation of US State Attorneys General in cooperation with the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The delegation, comprised of four attorneys general, was led by Attorney General Doug Gansler (Maryland). The delegation participated in discussions with prominent professors of Turkish law faculties, as well as Turkish business and policy leaders on subjects ranging from constitutional issues, civil liberties, press freedom, comparison of legal systems, and the rule of law. The delegation also met with the President of Turkey, H.E. Abdullah Gul; the President of the Constitutional Court of Turkey, H.E. Hasim Kilic; the Ministry of Justice; officials from the U.S. Embassy; and members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

"You never really know a country until you visit and speak directly to the people on the street. TCA does an excellent job of introducing you to a diverse spectrum of opinion leaders so that you can see the country in high definition." **Austin Weatherford, Legislative Director, Adam Kinzinger (R-IL)**



TCA-sponsored June 2012 National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) delegation led by NAAG President Doug Gansler of Maryland at the Bouleuterion in ancient Patara, the birthplace of federalism.



The new TCA headquarters in Washington, DC were formally inaugurated on January 17, 2012 with a lively reception featuring minority community leaders, embassy officials, and members of Congress. The office has already become a central meeting place and second home for many friends and allies.

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