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Wexler's Eurasia Foundation Legislation Passes House

Bill Authorizes Funding to Strengthen Democracy and the Rule of Law in Former Soviet States

(Washington, DC) Today, the House of Representatives passed the Eurasia Foundation Act (H.R. 2949), legislation authored by Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The bill authorizes funding to the Eurasia Foundation, a privately managed non-profit organization supported by the US government as well as public and private donors. The Eurasia Foundation promotes democracy and free enterprise in the countries that once comprised the Soviet Union. H.R. 2949 authorizes 15 million dollars in appropriations to the Eurasia Foundation for Fiscal Year 2008 and 2009.

"Passage of the Eurasia Foundation Act comes at a critical time in our relations with several Eurasian states that are still economically, politically, and socially transitioning following the collapse of the Soviet Union," Congressman Wexler said. "By supporting the Eurasia Foundation, I strongly believe that the United States can bolster its effort to promote democracy, freedom, thriving economies, and the rule of law in Eurasia. It is my hope that America's continued engagement in this region at the highest levels will not only strengthen the security of our nation but also pave the way for further integration of Eurasian nations into the transatlantic community."

The Eurasia Foundation was created in 1992 with bipartisan support and has invested over \$360 million through more than 8,400 grants and operating programs in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Former Secretaries of State Madeline Albright and James Baker, who serve as Co-Chairs of the Eurasia Foundation's Advisory Council, have long endorsed the efforts of the organization to these nations' efforts to build economic and civic prosperity. By authorizing grants to the Eurasia Foundation, Congressman Wexler's legislation strengthens US efforts to promote democracy in nations formerly comprising the Soviet Union.

Congressman Wexler is Chairman of the Europe Subcommittee, a senior member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Judiciary Committee, and he also sits on the Financial Services Committee.

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