

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Washington, DC, July 31, 2008-  
"Thanks to U.S. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), the U.S. Administration removed a major obstacle to reaching a solution to the FYROM name issue," said leaders of the Coordinated Effort of Hellenes (CEH). The obstacle was the administration downplaying the extraordinary problem of FYROM's efforts to justify the inclusion in their country of territory in northern Greece, a movement defined as "irredentism." The lever used by Senators Menendez and Snowe to move the administration was their refusal to allow the U.S. Senate to confirm our new U.S. Ambassador to FYROM until American policy was improved. CEH leaders said, "State Department officials were ostensibly telling FYROM that the U.S. would like them to stop seeking a name like 'Macedonia' that describes a part of northern Greece. However, these same officials were also discouraging such a change by saying that Greece's opposition to their use of the name 'Macedonia' was unjustified. Public statements by State Department officials indicated that FYROM's irredentism was no worse than Greece's questioning half-century-old private property claims by Skopjians in Greece." The Administration had previously refused to use the word "irredentism" when describing FYROM's desire to use the name "Macedonia." This was the case even though: (1) the name "Macedonia" describes an ancient geographical area, the majority of which is located in northern Greece; (2) FYROM's Prime Minister was recently pictured in front of a map depicting much of northern Greece as part of FYROM; and (3) videotapes show FYROM state schools teaching that parts of northern Greece should be part of FYROM."

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## Editorial

We will keep our message short and to the point. In no time is AHC's maxim of "SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US" more relevant than at election times, especially when those coincide with the presidential run. For our united effort to be truly united and most effective, we are called upon to support candidates who have supported legislation that is beneficial to the interests of the Greek American community. We are indeed most effective when we can cast aside party affiliation and emotion and cast our support clearly on the basis of performance, regardless of which party it emanates from.

The ultimate hope is that in the future, through a united effort, we will command respect across the political spectrum and that principled legislation that we advocate will be universally accepted, thus removing once and for all the burden of having to make choices that may be contrary to core individual political and philosophical beliefs.

To assist you in making the politically correct choices for the California Congressional seats, we have enclosed in this issue a Report Card that takes into consideration the legislative record with respect to our issues for each incumbent candidate. We will accordingly and based on that record, endorse or not endorse the candidate. Please take the time to vote and inspire others to do so as well while keeping in mind that this is our greatest chance to really make our community politically relevant.

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March 2008 - AHC President Dr. Nicolaos Alexopoulos with the President of the University Club Takis Dimopoulos during AHC's Annual Honors Dinner Dance.

## Plant Your Roots in Greece

In an effort to help replant the forests in Greece that were devastated by the 2007 fires, AHC donated \$45,775 with the support of our members to the Plant Your Roots in Greece Foundation. "Plant Your Roots" is a non-profit organization and was established in 1991 in Washington, DC. This donation will pay for the installation of an irrigation system for 18,000 trees in the Kalyvia area of Attica. The trees are donated by the Greek Government but need irrigation for the first 3-4 years until they are self sufficient. Our community's assistance was a significant effort in helping Greece to restore its natural ecology and protect the environment that was severely damaged by arsonists.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CON'T

This change in Administration policy was made explicit in a letter sent to Senator Menendez by an Assistant Secretary of State who indicated that the name Macedonia could have irredentist implications. He said, "We seek a solution that resolves confusion between the country of Macedonia and the larger historical geographic area of Macedonia. Some in Greece have expressed their concern that this confusion could give rise to irredentism...Our Ambassador will, as well, help these leaders understand the dangers of irredentism in any form and the importance of avoiding the implications of irredentism in any form, as well as the need to develop good relations with all of its neighbors." The Administration also reversed its refusal to communicate the contents of Congressional legislation that highlights FYROM's violations of its UN-brokered Interim Agreement with Greece. The letter said that the incoming U.S. Ambassador to FYROM "will, on behalf of the Administration, make the leaders of that country aware of the language contained in pending Senate Resolution 300. This resolution expresses, the sense of the Senate that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) should stop the utilization of materials that violate provisions of the United Nations-brokered Interim Agreement between FYROM and Greece regarding "hostile activities or propaganda" and should work with the United Nations and Greece to achieve long-standing United States and United Nations policy goals of finding a mutually-acceptable official name for FYROM." CEH leaders said, "Ambassador to FYROM - designate Philip Reeker is reputed to be a fair and highly regarded individual. There are indications that his equating in Senate testimony FYROM's irredentism with Greece's questioning minor private property claims by Skopjians to be the work of anti-Hellenes in the State Department. We are hopeful that Reeker will have the skill and judgment to utilize these new Administration positions to help FYROM understand that their best interests reside in a name that does not describe the territory of another country." CEH leaders concluded by saying, "we greatly appreciated the efforts of Senators Menendez and Snowe and their staff for this significant accomplishment.

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## Editorial CON'T

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We have refrained in the past as in the present election, from endorsing a presidential candidate, due to the fact that bipartisan emotions run high in the selection of Chief Executive and thus require a very mature and issue committed constituency. On that basis we are reluctant to make an endorsement that may potentially be divisive. All the same, we strongly encourage our members to make that choice on statements that both candidates have made on our issues that can be easily searched and verified. We believe that the differences on the candidates (strictly based on our issues) are stark and represent the best opportunity for support in the Executive Branch that our community has ever had.

We wish everyone well and may soon emerge stronger.

-AHC Board of Directors

## Patriarchate Presentation

AHC organized a presentation at St. John the Baptist church in Anaheim on January 13, 2008 to inform the church members about the harassment of the Greek Orthodox Christian Patriarchate in Istanbul by the Turkish authorities. There was a subsequent presentation on June 22, 2008 at Saint Nicholas' Church in Northridge. During these presentations held after the church service, AHC Vice President of Administration Eleni Hioureas, informed the audience about the ways in which the Turkish government has been repressing the rights and religious freedoms of Greek Orthodox Christians in Turkey. These include excessive taxation of the Patriarchate, seizure of many of the Patriarchate properties, refusal to recognize the Patriarchate as Ecumenical (international), closure of the Halki Theological school, and severe limitation and control over the processes by which the Patriarchate is selected.

During this presentation, Hioureas also explained how all of us can make a difference regarding this issue. One easy step that we all can take is to go to the AHC web page and use AHC's

## The Los Angeles Greek Film Festival 2008

Now in its 2nd year the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival (June 25-June 29) has evolved into a prestigious event that offered filmgoers an exciting opportunity to view a diverse collection of quality productions from Greece and of Greek artists in general from throughout the world. Over thirty feature films and documentaries, many US premiers, played within the five-day festival. The festival concept of intermixing film showing with special presentations of related topic was interesting and well received.

This years highlights included an engaging Cassavetes tribute/retrospective with film screenings of the director and a panel discussion with many of his collaborators including Gena Rowlands, Seymour Cassel, Bo Harwood, Al Ruban, moderated by Peter Bogdanovich. A script competition that was offered for the first time received over 70 scripts from Greek writers around the world and culminated in a panel discussion which included Kurt Jonhs-tad, writer of the blockbuster hit 300

*Continued on page 6*

online action link to send letters to our local congressional members to sign on to House Resolution 373, which would require our government to urge Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Patriarchate. This online action link can be found on the AHC web site, [www.americanhellenic.org](http://www.americanhellenic.org). Please take a moment to go online and contact your local representative. If you need help in identifying your congressional representative please call our office at (323) 651-3507.

Because of the initiative taken online by the church members in the local district of Anaheim as a result of the presentation, Congressman Ed Royce Senior Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee contacted AHC and St. John's in order to establish closer ties to the Greek community and learn more about our issues. Congressman Royce also attended the St. John's festival.

It is important that we continue to contact our representatives so that we can reach more congressional representatives in the future and influence them to act in favor of our issues.





May 2008 - State Senate Minority Leader Alice Constandina Titus with AHC VP of Finance Eleftheria Polychronis and Recording Secretary Dr. George Gavalas.



May 2008 - U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid with former AHC Executive Director Ken Kassakhian, AHC VP of Administration Eleni Hioureas and Assistant Executive Director Irma Seferi-Goodenough



June 2008 - Board Member Dinos Andrianos during the Patriarchate Presentation at St. Nicholas' Church in Northridge CA.



September 2008 - Best-selling author Giles Milton presenting his new book "Paradise Lost-Smyrna 1922". Milton shares his insight and research into the compelling true story of the burning of the port city of Smyrna by Turkish forces.

## COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

### **Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922**

On September 29, the Friends of the Glendale Library in cooperation with the American Hellenic Council and the University Club organized a book signing event presenting Best Selling Author Giles Milton and his new book *Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922*. The presentation took place in Glendale where more than 100 people attended the event. In *Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922* the author Giles Milton shares his insight and research into the compelling true story of the burning of the port city of Smyrna by Turkish forces and the mass murder and exodus of its Greek and Armenian inhabitants. Milton draws on eyewitness accounts to render the Smyrna events in all their horror and ends with an almost incredible rescue led by an unlikely hero.

The event was honored by the presence of Consul General of Greece Dimitris Caramitsos - Tzirias, who shared his knowledge and views on this great human drama of the early twentieth century.

Giles Milton is a journalist and best-

selling author of five previous works of nonfiction: *White Gold*, *Samurai William*, *The Riddle and the Knight*, *Big Chief Elizabeth*, and *Nathaniel's Nutmeg*. He lives in London.

### **Cypriot Archaeology**

AHC co-sponsored a lecture by Tom Davis, Director of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Nicosia called "Current Archaeology in Cyprus" on November 13, 2007 at the UCLA Fowler Museum. The lecture featured some of the most recent findings in Cypriot archaeology. The lecture was also co-sponsored by the UCLA Department of Classics, AIA LA Chapter, Hellenic University Club of Southern California, CAARI, and the Hon. Council General of Cyprus.

### **Fundraiser for Hilda Solis**

On April 7, 2008, former State Treasurer Phil Angelides hosted a fundraising luncheon for Congresswoman Hilda Solis at the California Club in downtown Los Angeles.

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Barack Obama and Joe Biden: Supporting: Greek Americans



Barack Obama and Joe Biden have been true friends of the Greek American community throughout their careers in public service. Obama has worked closely with this community, especially the large constituency in Chicago, Illinois, and always supported the Greek community's participation in the American political process. Obama and Biden greatly respect the major contributions Greek Americans have made to so many aspects of the American experience. They will continue to work closely with Greek Americans at home and reestablish America's strong partnership with Greece and our other European allies abroad.

A Just and Lasting Political Settlement on Cyprus: As president, Barack Obama will show U.S. leadership in seeking to negotiate a political settlement on Cyprus. He believes strongly that Cyprus should remain a single, sovereign country in which each of the two communities on the island is able to exercise substantial political authority within a bi-zonal, bicomunal federation. There must be a just and mutually agreed settlement of difficult issues like property, refugees, land and security. A negotiated political settlement on Cyprus would end the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus and repair the island's tragic division while paving the way to prosperity and peace throughout the entire region. It would also give Cypriots a firm foundation on which to build their future after many years of division uncertainty. It would help foster better Greek-Turkish relations, strengthen Turkish democracy, reduce the risk of military conflict, and remove a major obstacle to Turkish membership in EU.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Barack Obama was one of the three original lead co-sponsors of Senate Resolution 300, which urged that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia work with Greece within the framework of the United Nations policy goal.

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*For updated news on Hellenic issues please visit our website at: [www.americanhellenic.org](http://www.americanhellenic.org)*

## THE 2008 AHC ANNUAL HONORS DINNER DANCE

On March 22, 2008, AHC hosted its Annual Dinner Dance with great success. This year, we had over 410 people in attendance to celebrate the achievements of Mr. Peter Demopoulos, the President of the Hellenic University Club; Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren from the Sixteenth Congressional District of California; and Dr. Chrysostomos L. Max Nikias, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at the University of Southern California. Los Angeles Lakers Announcer Spero Dedes and City Clerk of Glendale Ardy Kassakhian, graciously served as the Masters of Ceremonies.

In attendance, we also had many other dignitaries and politicians, including Governor Michael Dukakis, Consul General of Greece Dimirtis Caramitsos-Tziras, and Consul General of Cyprus Andreas Kyprianides.

This year, we also held our first annual silent auction, which helped us raise more donations to support our efforts to sustain the presence of a Greek voice in the national political arena. We hope that you will join us again in March 2009 for our next celebration and make that event as successful as this year's event.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Saturday, March 21,**  
**2009**

YOU ARE INVITED TO  
OUR **ANNUAL HONOR**  
**DINNER DANCE**

WHICH WILL BE HELD  
AT THE OMNI HOTEL  
IN DOWN-TOWN  
LOS ANGELES

SEE YOU THERE!!!

## Scenes From the AHC

### 2008 Annual Honors Dinner Dance

*March 22, 2008*



**Thank You For Your Support!**



## DINNER DANCE SPONSORS

The AHC would like to thank the following for their generous support of the 2008 Annual Honors Dinner Dance.

**BENEFACTORS**  
The Havadjias Family

**PATRONS**  
Aris Anagnos  
& Isaura Rivera-Anagnos  
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Michael Gionis  
The Hellenic Museum of Chicago  
The Kallins Family  
George & Tina Kolovos  
James Kousoulas  
John Livanis  
Peter Papanikolaou  
The Rapis Family  
Alex Spanos and Family  
Tom Stavrakas  
Jack Trupiano  
Nora Tsekoura  
The Vlahakis & Hanks Families

Thank you all so very much!



Let your voice be heard  
through  
AHC Online Action:

[WWW.AMERICANHELLENIC.ORG](http://WWW.AMERICANHELLENIC.ORG)

See you on March 21, 2009  
for our next celebration!

## Barack Obama and Joe Biden: Supporting Greek Americans

Obama supports the UN-led negotiations and believes that there can and should be an agreement between Skopje and Athens on a mutually-acceptable name that leads to greater stability in the Balkans.

Ecumenical Patriarchate: Barak Obama was one of the 73 Senators who signed a letter to President Bush in 2006 urging him to press Turkey to restore the full rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Christian Church in Istanbul. He has sent Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice a personal letter on the same matter. Senator Obama calls on Turkey to respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate's rights and freedoms, including its property rights. Turkey should allow the reopening of the Patriarchate's school of theology on Halki Island and guarantee the right to train clergy of all nationalities, not just Turkish nationals.

The U.S. Economy: Despite their hard work, American families are finding it harder and harder each day to make ends meet. Barack Obama supports an immediate \$50,000 billion emergency stimulus plan that would provide immediate assistance to help struggling local governments, continue needed infrastructure projects and protect jobs. Barack Obama will restore fairness to the tax code and provide 95% of American workers with a tax credit of up to \$500 per person, or \$1,000 per working family. Obama will fight for trade agreements that support American jobs and enforce good labor and environmental standards.

Affordable, Accessible Health Care to All: There are 45.5 million uninsured Americans today. Obama will sign legislation by the end of his first term in office that will provide affordable, accessible health coverage to all Americans. His plan will save a typical family up to \$2,500 every year on medical costs by modernizing our health care system.

### ***Fundraiser for Hilda Solis Con't***

Several AHC members attended this event and spoke with Solis regarding several major Hellenic issues that they urged her to support.

Solis represents the 32nd District of California, which includes cities such as Azusa, Baldwin Park, City Terrace, Covina, Duarte, El Monte, El Sereno, Irwindale, Rosemead, South Baldwin Park, West Covina and parts of Monterey Park. Some of the major issues that she has focused on include expanding health care coverage, improving minority student access to education, reforming immigration policies, and supporting victims of domestic violence.

### ***Fundraiser for Alice Constantina "Dina" Titus***

On May 28, 2008 the American Hellenic Council organized a fundraiser for Alice Constantina "Dina" Titus who is a candidate for the third US Congressional District of Nevada. Stare Senator Titus is currently serving as Senate Democratic Minority Leader in the Assembly of Nevada, and is a former candidate for the Governor of that State. She has wide name recognition and excellent chance of getting elected to the US House of Representatives.

Present at the event was Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid, (D-NV) who came to campaign on behalf of Titus; he believes that Senator Titus will be a great asset to the American Congress. Senator Reid gave a speech to the guests and answered many questions. Senator Titus also gave a speech and answered questions. She is a strong supporter of all Hellenic issues before Congress and certain to promote them extensively when she gets to Washington. The speakers were introduced by Mr. Byron Georgiou, a lawyer from Las Vegas, who has been helping her campaign.

We had the opportunity to brief both Senator Majority leader Harry Reid and Dina Titus on the Hellenic issues and the importance of putting pressure on Turkey to withdraw the troops of occupation from Cyprus.

Senator Titus is of Hellenic heritage and hails originally from the State of Georgia. Should she win, she will join, among others in Congress, Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Nikki Tsongas (D-MS), Zack Space (D-OH), John Sarbanes (D-MD), and Senator Olympia Snow (D-MN), who are also of Greek heritage, who, we hope, will get re-elected.

The fundraiser was very successful. More than 70 people contributed \$17,500. The event was held at the home of Betty and Stanley Sheinbaum in Brentwood, where AHC has held several events and fundraisers in the past. Betty and Stanley are known philanthropists and strong supporters of Hellenic issues and we thank them for their support throughout the years.

If you are interested in learning more about Dina Titus or would like to contribute to her campaign, you may visit [www.dinatitus.com](http://www.dinatitus.com).

### ***Fundraiser for Zack Space***

On Saturday, October 11, 2008 the AHC hosted a fundraiser for Ohio Congressman Zach Space which collected over \$10,000 for his campaign.

Zack is a first term Democratic Congressman from Southeast Ohio who held a commanding lead in the polls before his opponent dropped out of the race for different law violations. Zack Space is a very dynamic lawyer. He is currently the City Law Director of Dover, Ohio, where he was born and raised. Zack is among the leaders of the Caucus on Hellenic Affairs.

If we get him re-elected, he will be very active in promoting all our issues such as the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus, the protection of the Patriarchate, the name issue with the Skopje government and others.

Zack is a member of AHE-PA, the Pan-Icarian Brotherhood, the American Hellenic Institute and St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Massillon, Ohio, where both his children were baptized.

If you wish to contribute to this important race, please make a secure on-line contribution to [www.ZackSpace.org](http://www.ZackSpace.org) or contact our office at 323-651-3507.



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April 2008 - Congresswoman Hilda Solis joined by VP of Administration Eleni Hioureas, AHC Board Members Kelly Vlahaki-Hank, Michael Galanaki and former AHC Executive Director Ken Kassakhian.



January 2008 - VP of Administration Eleni Hioureas during the Patriarchate Presentation at St. John the Baptist Church in Anaheim.

Los Angeles Greek Film Festival Barbara de Fina (Executive producer of Goodfellas), Stratton Leopold (Executive Producer of Mission Impossible III), Kary Arnolis of HBO and other prominent members of the industry. The award for best script was won by Nicholas Proferes for Romeros, Julietta & the General.

The Festival opened with a fun Red Carpet Reception and a first screening of a newly restored print of Zorba the Greek. The film originally released in 1964 was nominated for seven Academy Awards and has won three. The meticulously restored print brilliantly displayed its award winning cinematography. Given the opening night momentum the festival enjoyed enthusiastic audience attendance and full theaters throughout its five-day-run

Dr. Olga Maleas' excellent "Little Greek Godfather", out of competition film, was a closing night favorite. The director was present as well as the actors Tex Pardue and Manos Garvas.

The El Networks Debbie Matenopoulos presided at the festive Closing Night Ceremonies award presentations. The winner of the Orpheus Award for Best Feature and Best Direction was given to "Eduart" directed by Angeliki Antoniou. Nicos Ligoris "The lovers from Axos" was selected as best documentary. A Special Jury Award was given to Dora Askavanou's "Coming as a friend" as well as Greg Takoudes' "Up with me." Audience awards went to Katerina Evangelakou's "False Alarm" for Best Feature. Alexander Papanicolaou and Emilie Yannoukou's Resurface for Best Documentary and Yannis Bougioukas' "The Cup" for Best Short. The Jury Orpheus Award for Best Short Film was awarded to Transit, directed by Yiannis Gaitanidis.

Congratulations to Angeliki Yannakopoulos, Ersi Danou and Avra Georgiou for conceiving and implementing their Dream which has become a blessing.

## Jane Mitakides for "an America of opportunity and optimism"

A native Daytonian with a background in strategic communications and investor relations, Jane Mitakides understands the importance of a sound economic policy, fair trade agreements and policies that will bring and encourage business growth and add jobs to our community.

"I am running for Congress because I believe it is time for leadership focused on an America of opportunity and optimism, beginning with an economy that works for both families and businesses," she stated for NEO Magazine. "We have it within our power to make health care affordable, accessible and reliable; and to increase investments in infrastructure, energy independence, and education.

Jane Mitakides brings 20 years of political and campaign experience to her role as a candidate for OH-3. She is a founding member of both the Women's Council of Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and The Small Business Council of the Democratic National Committee. Jane is also active with organizations focused on issues of interest to Greek Americans, and was recently honored by PSEKA, the International Coordinating Committee for Justice for Cyprus.

According to Jane Mitakides, "it is time to put the partisanship of the past few years behind us and work toward long-term solutions to the changes facing America here and abroad. We must return America to its role as a world leader in education, innovation and international understanding."

"As a local businesswoman, Jane understands what it takes to bring good jobs to our community and strengthen the middle class. In Congress, she will bring people together to get the job done for our families on issues such as health care, the environment, and education," said Ohio Governor Ted Strickland.

Married for 26 years to John Mitakides, a dentist who has practiced in Dayton area for more than 30 years, Jane is also the very proud mother of two children: Katie, who is completing her PhD in International Relations and Andrew, a recent graduate of Hampden-Sydney College.

# SAVE THE DATE

Saturday March 21, 2009

Our Annual Honors Dinner Dance

WILL BE HELD AT THE OMNI HOTEL IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

While outspent by the Turkish lobby and other powerful interests working to undermine rights in the region, we know that our greatest strength in the struggle for justice lies in the energy and dedication of our grassroots membership. **Your contributions and continued support make all the difference!**

The AHC's mission is to ensure that the voice of the Greek American community is heard and respected by our elected officials in Washington, DC.

## We Need Your Support!

# AHC AMERICAN HELLENIC COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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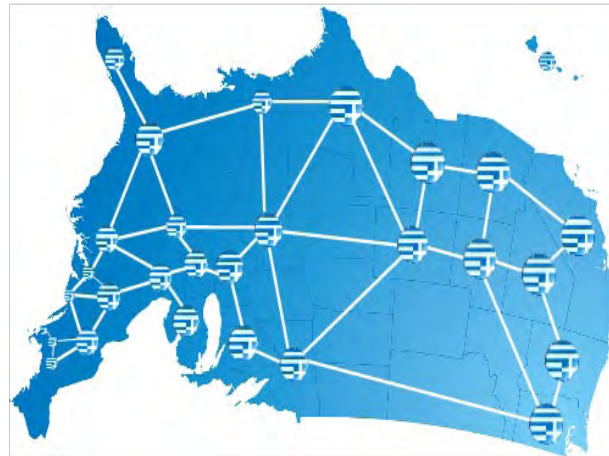
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Petros Benekos	

2006: The American Hellenic Council launches its Online Action Tool through which activists, with a few clicks of the mouse, send messages to their elected officials urging them to support Hellenic Issues in Congress.

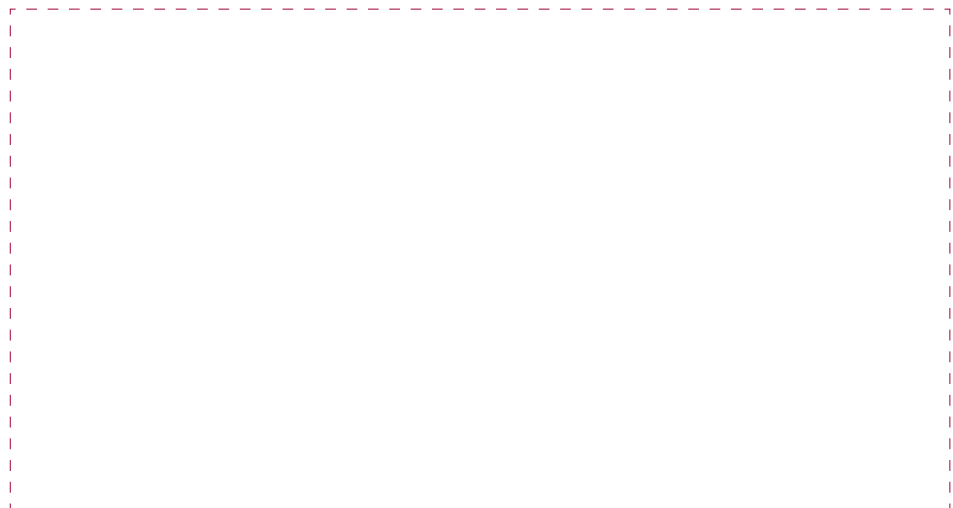
2007: The AHC Online Action network expands from 3 states to 34!

2008: With your continued support, we will continue to strengthen the voice of Hellenism in the halls of Congress.

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AHC Online Action Unites Activists from Across the Nation!



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