



Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

May 8, 2024

Hon. Frank Pallone
Member of Congress
2107 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

I am writing on behalf of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) to respectfully request that you lead efforts in the U.S. House of Representatives to expel your colleague Congressman Henry Cuellar (D-TX) in light of the charges made against him on April 30, 2024, by the U.S. Government (Criminal No.4:42-cr-00224).

As noted in a recently (November 7, 2023) updated report issued by the Congressional Research Service entitled, [Expulsion of Members of Congress: Legal Authority and Historical Practice](#), the U.S. Constitution “expressly grants each house of Congress the power to punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.” Mindful that the U.S. House of Representatives has only moved five times to expel a member, the ANCA makes this request of you given the gravity of the charges against Representative Cuellar and the imperative to defend our democratic principles in the face of Azerbaijan’s malign foreign interference.

The ANCA believes the bribery accusations against Congressman Cuellar are despicable and inconsistent with the transparent and accountable democracy we have the right to enjoy in the United States. The ANCA also believes that the corruption case against Congressman Cuellar may be just the “tip of the iceberg” and part of a broader foreign campaign that has contributed to a deeply flawed American foreign policy with respect to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, the indictment makes clear that Congressman Cuellar was, on several occasions, directed by Azerbaijani Embassy officials to subvert the activities of the Congressional Armenian Caucus. As founding co-chair of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, we look to your leadership in confronting this brazen attempt to undermine the critical work of the over 100 legislators committed to ensuring robust U.S. support for Armenia amid Azerbaijan’s genocidal assault on Artsakh.

In addition to initiating expulsion proceedings against Congressman Cuellar, we also urge you to engage with colleagues on the House Ethics Committee to conduct an investigation into the influence activities of the Azerbaijani Government and state-affiliated entities in the U.S. Congress – particularly as it pertains to the activities of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus. Azerbaijan's track record of foreign interference – already the subject of a House Ethics Committee [investigation](#) over undisclosed government-funded Congressional delegations to Azerbaijan – warrants further and intense scrutiny.

The Biden Administration's foreign policy towards Armenia and Artsakh has been, as I outlined in a March 21, 2024, letter to you and other members of Congress, a complete disaster. Examples of the Biden Administration's failures on issues of concern to Armenian Americans are:

- The Biden Administration reauthorized military assistance to Azerbaijan despite a campaign promise to enforce Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, even in the wake of Azerbaijan’s occupation of sovereign Armenian territory in 2021 and its blockade on Artsakh in 2023.
- The Biden Administration failed to declare Azerbaijan’s 10-month siege of Artsakh a humanitarian crisis – legitimizing Baku’s use of starvation as a tool of negotiation.
- The Biden Administration ruled out the use of sanctions to constrain Azerbaijan’s aggression in a public statement by Special Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations Lou Bono – undermining U.S. leverage over Baku.
- The Biden Administration refused to impose consequences on Azerbaijan following its military assault on Artsakh, despite having indicated during a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S. would “not countenance any attempt at ethnic cleansing.”
- The Biden Administration offered negligible humanitarian assistance to the 120,000 refugees forced from their homes by Azerbaijan – incommensurate with the dire needs of those displaced.
- The Biden Administration resumed high-level engagement with Azerbaijan in the absence of accountability – despite a commitment by Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia James O’Brien that there would be “no business as usual” with Azerbaijan following its assault on Nagorno-Karabakh.
- The Biden Administration legitimized a fundamentally asymmetric and unjust “peace process” between Armenia and Azerbaijan without demanding the immediate withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces from Armenian territory or an internationally guaranteed right of return for Artsakh’s Armenians.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. As the legal case against Congressman Cuellar advances in the court system, the ANCA looks forward to your principled leadership in condemning the Azerbaijani government’s attempts to undermine the sanctity of American democracy – and in leading the effort to expel Congressman Cuellar for accepting bribes from the regime of Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev.

Sincerely,



Raffi Haig Hamparian
ANCA National Board Chair

Cc: The Hon. Hakeem Jeffries, House Democratic Leader
The Hon. Katherine Clark, House Democratic Whip
The Hon. Pete Aguilar, House Democratic Caucus Chair
Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues
Armenian National Committee of America – Eastern Region (ANCA-ER)
Armenian National Committee – New Jersey (ANC-NJ)