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March 26, 2005

Kurdish National Congress of North America
Millennium Maxwell House Hotel
2025 MetroCenter Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37228

Dear Friends:

As the Congressional representative for Tennessee's Fifth District, let me welcome you to Nashville for the Kurdish National Conference. We are honored to have you in town as you come together in your 17th year to discuss this year's theme, "Kurdish Independence, Democracy and Regional Stability."

Nashville is the perfect setting for this year's conference. Only a few months ago, thousands of Iraqi Kurds came to Nashville to vote in the Iraqi elections. In addition, this city is home to the largest concentration of Kurds in the United States. I want to invite you to contact or stop by my office if there is anything my staff can do to help you in your dealings with the federal government.

In addition to helping with the INS, earlier this month I was able to write a letter to the Office of Management and Budget in Washington, urging the agency to change its regulations on the classification of minority groups eligible for federal grants. Currently, the regulations exclude Middle Eastern populations. There is no question that Kurds constitute a distinct and unique community in our area and the denial of federal resources is arbitrary and unfair. I sincerely hope that the Office of Management and Budget will reconsider its policies.

Today, I join with citizens from throughout Tennessee's Fifth Congressional District in extending my every best wish for a successful conference this year and a happy Kurdish New Year.

Sincerely,



Jim Cooper
Member of Congress