

Commissioner Jules Bailey

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From the desk of Rep. Jim Weidner

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Weidner".

April 17, 2015

Dear Chair Hoyle and members of the committee,

It's my pleasure to write this letter to you today in support of HJM 16. I wish I could be with you today, but I hope my support will come through.

Oregon's Turkish community is an important part of our cultural landscape. People of Turkish origin are many of our engineers, doctors, business owners, teachers, and more. I've had the pleasure of working closely with this community, and I value their partnership and commitment to intercultural and interfaith collaboration and dialogue.

Oregon has economic ties to Turkey as well - among many other things, Oregon and Turkey are the largest producers of hazelnuts in their respective regions. And Turkey is a cornerstone of our interests in the broader Middle East. In many ways, Oregon has a direct interest in what happens in Turkey.

It can be hard sometimes to tell a friend when they are wrong. Turkey has a history of secular democracy, which, while it has had its challenges, has been a beacon of stability in the region. Turkey is a critical NATO ally and has been a partner in American interests abroad. That's why it's particularly troubling to see Turkey now engaged in a campaign to abridge human rights, limit free speech, and stifle dissent. We have to hold our partners to a higher standard of freedom and democracy. Turkey cannot meet that standard while it is jailing and intimidating journalists.

This House Joint Memorial is important to stand by Oregon's Turkish community, to tell the Turkish government that we are watching, and to ask our government and global partners to get engaged. I hope you will pass it today.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jules Bailey".

Jules Bailey