



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

April 2, 2014

The Honorable Chris Murphy
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy and Senator Johnson:

The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) strongly supports S.Res. 403, condemning the Government of Turkey's recent blocking access to social media and thereby restricting free expression and Internet freedom. The strong and historic alliance between Turkey and the United States is grounded in a shared commitment to fundamental liberties. This resolution expresses appropriate concern about the Government of Turkey's recent actions while demonstrating that bipartisan collaboration remains alive and well in the foreign policy arena.

BPC's Turkey Initiative has published a series of bipartisan reports emphasizing the importance of, and current obstacles to, a cooperative U.S.-Turkey relationship. Foremost among these has been an increasing tendency toward authoritarian measures on the part of the Government of Turkey. Like you, BPC's Turkey Initiative is troubled by the recent restrictions placed on freedom of expression and speech through the ban on social media sites like Twitter and YouTube.

As you know, social media sites play an important and necessary role in democratic societies by helping citizens and journalists share information and communicate openly. Limiting access to these sites is a troubling development with worrisome implications for Turkey's democracy, standing in the region, and relationship with the United States. We appreciate your efforts to draw attention to this serious concern.

BPC applauds your bipartisan efforts to call attention to the restrictions on Internet freedom in Turkey and looks forward to continuing to work with you to ensure Turkish citizens have the right of free expression and that the United States and Turkey remain cooperative partners.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Morton Abramowitz
Co-chair
BPC Turkey Initiative

Ambassador Eric Edelman
Co-chair
BPC Turkey Initiative

Blaise Misztal
Acting Director
BPC Foreign Policy Project