

March 23, 1999

STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY ON GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today inserted the following statement in the Congressional Record in celebration of Greek Independence Day.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues and the people of Illinois' 9th Congressional District to celebrate the 178th year of Greek independence.

"Much like the United States, Greece's independence did not come easily. Greece had to struggle for several years in its battle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The perseverance that ultimately led to freedom for Greece is a symbol of the solid character of her people.

"I am happy to commemorate the independence of a nation that has contributed so much to the inception and development of the United States.

"Our Founding Fathers drew significantly on the democratic principles of the ancient Greeks, and our representative government is an extension of their philosophy, values, and wisdom. Their contributions have translated into an invaluable gift to the United States and other nations around the world, which enjoy the benefits of a democratic society.

"Today we celebrate Greek independence and those of Greek heritage who are living in the United States. They have brought so much flavor and beauty to our country.

"In my district, the beauty of Greek culture is not hard to find. It can be seen in the work of artists, felt in the drama of the theater, and tasted in the many Greek delicacies that Americans have grown so fond of.

"Greece has been a steadfast ally to the United States since the last century. As we approach the 21st century, I look forward to our nations' continuing cooperation and our peoples' lasting friendship. Once again, I wish to congratulate the people of Greece and all Greek-Americans on this special day."