



TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS LOST A HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITY

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On November 8th, 2022, elections for the House of Representatives and Senate took place in the United States (US). In the midterm elections, in which the Republican and Democrat candidates competed vehemently, there were some important developments that also concern Turkey. In the past weeks, we have written that there have been out-of-context developments, such as measuring the degree of hostility against Turkey among the candidates who are campaigning for the mayors office of Los Angeles[1]. The midterm elections that have taken place give an idea of President Joe Biden will maintain his seat firmly for the next two years or will lose confidence. As it is seen, the Democrats have not experienced a substantial defeat. One of the swing states, Pennsylvania, was won by Democratic Party candidate John Fetterman. Republican Party candidate Dr. Mehmet Öz was behind Fetterman by %3. In this analysis, we will draw attention to Republican candidate Dr. Mehmet Özs campaign process.

The American candidates have been working for the midterm election campaigns for a long time. One of the hardest working of these candidates is undoubtedly the Republican Party's Pennsylvania Senate candidate Dr. Mehmet Öz, who is also supported by former President Donald Trump. Dr. Öz campaigned intensely against his opponent, Democratic candidate John Fetterman. Dr. Öz had to put in much more effort in his campaign than the other candidates. This effort is not just because Pennsylvania being a key state in the US election. Dr. Öz has become a salient name due to his Turkish nationality. As a matter of fact, as the election date approached during the campaign process, the intensity of protests against Turkey and Turkishness increased.

In mid-October, the intensity of these protests began to increase. In a news report dated October 14th, 2022, the protesters, referring to senator candidate Dr. Mehmet Öz, claimed that his election to the Senate would be a blow to democracy[2]. Dr. Özs rival, Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman, also acted in solidarity with the protesters. Essentially, as Fetterman is a Pennsylvanian, he gained the upper hand

against Dr. Öz. There is no doubt towards the fact that Dr. Öz only recently moved to Pennsylvania and this also contributed to his loss of the election.

In addition, the fact that he should not take part in the elections because he has dual citizenship (American and Turkish) has been profusely underlined by American Armenians [3]. Dr. Öz, in March 2022, had announced that he would renounce his Turkish citizenship if he won the elections[4]. Dr. Öz has cited his mothers health condition as the reason he has kept his Turkish citizenship up to now. Senate historians, on the other hand, could not find any information on whether there has been anyone with dual citizenship in the Senate, only stating that there was the example of Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who renounced his Canadian citizenship in 2014[5].

In the midterm elections, both Dr. Mehmet Öz and Steve Chabot, Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on US [] Türkiye Relations and Turkish Americans would undoubtedly have created a suitable opportunity for resisting and responding to anti-Turkey initiatives in the US Senate. In this respect, the midterm elections would have been an important turning point in the context of the Türkiye [] US relations. From this point of view, it can be stated that bilateral relations have lost a historical opportunity, since it will not be possible to express Turkish views in the US Congress.

*Photo: https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/decision-2022/oz-fetterman-both-target-suburbs-in-key-pa-senate-race/3364118/

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