

BULLETIN

Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts December 2006

1. PAC NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ELECTED IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

On Friday, October 20, 2006, the National Directors of the Polish American Congress elected their National Executive Committee for the 2006-2008 term of office:

Frank J. Spula, President
Virginia Sikora, First Vice President
Anthony J. Bajdek, Vice President for American Affairs
Ludwik Wnękowicz, Vice President for Polish Affairs
Richard Pierchalski, Vice President for Financial Development
Marcin Bolec, Vice President for Membership Development
Deborah Majka, Vice President for Cultural Affairs
Jerzy Różalski, Vice President for Public Relations
Robert Maycan, Treasurer
Wallace Zieliński, Secretary

All but Mr. Ró alski, who defeated incumbent Brian Rusk, had served for the 2004-2006 term of office as well. Worthy of note for the New England region of the United States is that two of the ten PAC national officers, Bajdek and Bolec, are residents of Massachusetts.

2. UPDATE: VISA WAIVER FOR POLAND STATE RESOLUTION CAMPAIGN

As of the this date, the legislatures of ten states have passed Joint and other Resolutions in support of Poland being admitted to the Visa Waiver Program of the United States Department of State. These ten legislatures represent states where according to the 2000 United States Census nearly half (i.e., **4,390,043**) or 48.9% of our nation's total number of **8,977,444** Polish Americans live and vote:

Massachusetts, 323,210 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, May 2004)
New Jersey, 576,473 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, October 2004)
Vermont, 20,484 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, January 2005)
Pennsylvania, 824,146 Polish Americans: (Senate, February 2005; House, April, 2005)
Connecticut, 284,272 Polish Americans: (Senate, May 2005)
Maine, 24,982 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, May 2005)
Nebraska, 62,475 Polish Americans: (Unicameral Resolution, June 2005)
New York, 986,141 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, June 2005)
Ohio, 433,016 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, June 2005)
Michigan, 854,844 Polish Americans: (Joint Resolution, June 2006)

The passage of these Resolutions constitutes an outstanding fact of contemporary American political life and is a conspicuous measure of success achieved by our Polish American Congress, the national driving force for the Resolutions.

The *great opportunity for the Polish American Congress* as it relates to the Visa Waiver for Poland campaign should be self-evident. With the remaining states of **Arizona** (126,665 Polish Americans), **California** (491,325), **Delaware** (40,636), **Florida** (429,621), **Illinois** (932,996), **Indiana** (183,989),

Maryland (184,364), **Rhode Island** (43,159), and **Texas** (228,309) in which a total of **2,661,064** more (i.e., **29.6%** of America's Polonia) of our Polish American brothers and sisters live, and **in which the Polish American Congress has state Divisions**, PAC National Vice President for American Affairs **Anthony J. Bajdek** is working with state Division presidents to identify state legislators most likely to sponsor and pass Visa Waiver for Poland Joint or other Resolutions prior to May 1, 2007. If Visa Waiver for Poland Resolutions are passed in these nine PAC Division states, the effort will produce a total of **78.5%** of our nation's Polish Americans (**7,051,107**) covered by their respective state legislative Visa Waiver for Poland Resolutions. With appropriate publicity nationwide, the derivative benefits for the Polish American Congress and Poland will be momentous.

To this end, Bajdek proposed to the PAC National Directors who met in San Diego, California on October 19-21, 2006 a comprehensive plan that includes the creation of two ad hoc political action groups, **Task Force Saratoga** and **Task Force Raclawice**, along with creation of annual **Polish American Congress Days in State Legislatures**, **Polish Caucuses in State Legislatures**, and a **Polish American Congress Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC** among other politically focused initiatives.

In this regard, he appealed to the aforementioned nine state PAC Division presidents, who constitute **Task Force Saratoga** to notify him of prospective possible sympathetic legislators *beyond those* he has already communicated with (i.e., Representatives **Laura Knaperek**, **Bill Konopnicki**, and **Tom Prezelski** in Arizona; Senator **J. Bradley Burzyński** in Illinois; Representative **Tom Kromkowski** in Indiana; Representative **Carolyn Krysiak** in Maryland; Senators **V. Susan Sosnowski** and **William Walaska** in Rhode Island; and Senator **Kyle Janek** in Texas) and of course, in California and Delaware where he hadn't yet established communications with any legislators. In California, fellow National Director, Dr. Andrzej Prokopczuk of San Diego, offered to help earlier and Southern California PAC President Richard Wideryski, for example, took up the challenge during the San Diego meeting. In Illinois, fellow National Director Barbara Miller, Treasurer of the Polish Women's Alliance of America, had already engaged the support of Senator Burzyński. In Florida, furthermore, Dean Bajdek is working with Polish American activist Tony Dundee of Miami and his colleagues in veterans' posts to jump start a petition campaign statewide as Bajdek has done both in the state of Washington with Władysław Jasiński of Spokane and in Illinois with Barbara Miller.

Bajdek also encouraged the nine state PAC Division Presidents ideally to meet with their state legislators *prior* to the Christmas holidays, if possible. Concurrently, Dean Bajdek will also communicate with the same involved legislators on the matter of updating them on Visa Waiver for Poland nationally and urging their cooperation with the Division Presidents. This will be a coordinated venture because by acting in a unified effort, greater PAC strength and influence will be established leading to success.

Because the Polish American Congress currently has 28 State Divisions and Chapters located in 17 states and the District of Columbia, Dean Bajdek created, for the purpose of pursuing Visa Waiver for Poland legislation in all remaining states *not having* Divisions and Chapters, **Task Force Raclawice** whose purpose it will be to devise an ongoing action plan to identify Polish American contacts in those states willing to participate in the process. In New England, he specifically appeals to PAC/E. Mass. members residing in New Hampshire to work with him to convince New Hampshire state legislators to pass a Visa Waiver for Poland Resolution. Bajdek has already established precedent for working in non-PAC Division states by achieving passage of Visa Waiver for Poland Resolutions in Maine, Nebraska, and Vermont, and is working with Senator **Floyd Prożański** of Oregon for passage of a Resolution in that state as well.

The Visa Waiver for Poland campaign is not without a downside. In Wisconsin, the state legislature defeated a Visa Waiver for Poland Resolution in June 2005. Wisconsin has the highest percentage of Polish Americans in its general population among all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As such, Dean Bajdek seeks support to re-introduce another Resolution that would include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary as well as Poland, all nations being pre-approved by the U.S. Government Accounting Office, State Department, and Homeland Security for having submitted acceptable compliance plans.

It should be remembered that the Resolutions originating in state legislatures are sent to the President and the Congress of the United States, and that copies as well are sent to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security. In other words, the state legislative Resolutions sustain pressure on Washington to admit Poland to the Visa Waiver Program, an important point not to be missed.

Finally, Bajdek further urged PAC/E National Directors to become proactive *now* about the issues noted above because national United States Census Data in recent decades discloses fewer Americans identifying Polish ancestry. *This* may well be the greatest substantive future Polonia problem we Polish Americans will have to face in the United States. Without significant numbers, we will run the risk of exercising less influence in state and federal government and politics.

3. MAINE STATE REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD J. MAZUREK JOINS PAC/E. MASS.

In February 2006, State Representative Mazurek submitted an application for membership in the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts. His interest in PAC/E. Mass. came both as a surprise and a non-surprise concurrently, so to speak. Mr. Mazurek of Rockland, Maine represents Legislative District 47. He had been contacted by PAC/E. Mass. President Anthony J, Bajdek early in 2005 about the possibility of sponsoring a Visa Waiver for Poland Resolution in Maine's legislature. Originally from Connecticut and proud of his Polish heritage, State Representative Mazurek volunteered to take on the task, and largely through his efforts and those of his co-sponsors, Maine passed a Visa Waiver for Poland Resolution in May 2005. In February 2006, Representative Mazurek participated as a state legislative speaker (along with Massachusetts State Representative John Scibak) in the **Fifth Annual Kościuszko's Birthday – Washington's Birthday Political Forum and Banquet** of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts, a venue that featured Poland's Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Janusz Reiter, and Polish National Alliance's Polish American Congress President, Frank Spula as principal speakers. PAC/E. Mass. welcomes Maine State Representative Mazurek as a distinguished colleague.

4. COMING ON FEBRUARY 18, 2007 A "WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A POLE: EASY OR COMPLICATED? SIGNIFICANCE FOR POLAND AND POLISH AMERICANS IN TODAY'S TROUBLED WORLD" SYMPOSIUM FOR THE SIXTH ANNUAL KOŚCIUSZKO'S BIRTHDAY – WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY POLITICAL FORUM AND BANQUET

This annual event will take place from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Henderson House Conference Center of Northeastern University in Weston, MA and will feature a symposium on the subject above that will be led by Professor **Mieczysław B. Biskupski**, Ph.D., holder of the Stanislas A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish and Polish American Studies, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT. Included on the panel will be **Piotr Erenfeicht**, First Secretary, Political Section, Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Washington, DC, and **Ferdynand Dąbkowski**, Engineer, Luminus Devices, Woburn, MA. The fourth panelist to be announced on the PAC/E. Mass. website (www.paceasternmass.org) by January 1, 2007. Reception, banquet, and musical entertainment are included. (See accompanying flier for additional related details.)

5. PAC NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR AMERICAN AFFAIRS BAJDEK OF MASSACHUSETTS IS GUEST AT THE FEBRUARY 9, 2006 WASHINGTON, DC DINNER FOR POLAND'S PRESIDENT KACZYŃSKI

The occasion of the dinner had been created as a derivative of President Lech Kaczyński's meeting with President George W. Bush earlier the same day. The dinner was hosted and organized by the Polish Embassy to take place on behalf of President Kaczyński in the Blair House which is located on the grounds of the White House. The Blair House serves as the official residence for foreign heads of state and government when visiting the President of the United States. The dinner for some twenty persons in the Blair House was made up of several Polish Embassy officials, including Ambassador Janusz Reiter, the

entourage of President Kaczyński, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs Stefan Meller, and leaders of East Coast Polonia. (See PAC/E. Mass. website under "Polonia Chronicle" for photo.)

6. PAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVES THREE RESOLUTIONS IN SAN DIEGO ON OCTOBER 21, 2006

The Executive Committee of the Polish American Congress approved the following three resolutions prepared by the Resolutions Committee:

1. Resolution of Support for the Polish Government

The Council of National Directors of PAC recognizes the achievements of the current Sejm and Government of Poland. The restructuring of the military intelligence services, passage of the Law of Lustration, updating of the structure of the Institute of National Remembrance, the creation of *Karta Polaka*, are indeed milestones in Poland's contemporary history opening up the way towards a more tranquil and equitable political future. All of these initiatives indicate a thorough understanding of and concern for Poland's national interest.

2. Resolution on Restoration of Polish Citizenship

The National Directors of the PAC respectfully request the Sejm, Senate and President of Poland to recognize as Polish citizens all persons born in Poland, who wish to be recognized as such. In considering such cases, we feel that all acts of denunciation of Polish citizenship between 1945 and 1989 not be taken into consideration.

3. Resolution on PAC Mission to Poland

Whereas, it is vital for the Polish American community to be in close contact with Poland; Whereas, visits to Poland and meetings with Polish leaders in Poland are one of the best ways to be in close contact with Poland; Whereas, the Polish American community looks to the Polish American Congress to lead our community in strengthening our ties with Poland.

Be it resolved, that the Council of National Directors strongly urges all the national officers of the Polish American Congress to carry out an official mission to Poland by January 1, 2008, and that participation in this mission be made available to Polish American Congress National Directors on an at-cost basis.

7. PAC/E. MASS. DIRECTOR MARK P. SZPAK IS DESIGNATED *AMICUS POLONIAE* BY THE POLISH GOVERNMENT

On Sunday, November 12, 2006, Attorney Mark P. Szpak, Corresponding Secretary of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts and long-standing Polonia activist, was honored by the Republic of Poland in a ceremony held at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in South Boston during which he was designated an *Amicus Poloniae*. According to the Polish Embassy, in 1996 the Ambassador of Poland to the United States endowed the award *Amicus Poloniae* (Friend of Poland) for American citizens who gained extraordinary accomplishments in development of Polish-American relations, and specifically in popularization of Polish culture, science, and general promotion of Poland in America. These aspects are seen as extremely important in the cognitive process between nations. Looking at the list of laureates, we may conclude (the) prestige of the *Amicus Poloniae* award grows alongside with the number of outstanding names, represent various groups and communities in the United States. The Board of Directors of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts congratulates fellow Board member Mark P. Szpak who now joins the prestigious list of *Amicus Poloniae* laureates in the United States.

8. POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS HONORS MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE AND CONGRESS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF POLAND AND POLISH AMERICANS

In Washington, DC on Tuesday, December 5, 2006 the Polish American Congress hosted a **Polish American Congressional Tribute** - an appreciation ceremony during which forty U.S. Senators and Representatives were honored for their active involvement in legislative initiatives to benefit Polish Americans and Poland during the second session of the 109th Congress. The Polish American Congress presented selected legislators with a token of appreciation, that being a special volume showcasing private "Polish Art Collections in America".

The following legislators were honored in the U.S. Senate: **Richard Durbin** (D-IL), **William Frist** (R-TN), **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE), **Richard Lugar** (R-IN), **Barbara Mikulski** (D-MD), **Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK), **Barack Obama** (D-IL), **Rick Santorum** (R-PA), **Debbie Stabenow** (D-MI), and **George V. Voinovich** (R-OH).

Honored in the U.S. House of Representatives were: **Shelley Berkley** (D-NV), **Madeleine Z. Bordallo** (D-GU), **Dan Burton** (R-IN), **Joseph Crowley** (D-NY), **JoAnn Davis** (R-VA), **Lincoln Diaz-Balart** (R-FL), **John D. Dingell** (D-MI), **Rahm Emanuel** (D-IL), **Phil English** (R-PA), **Luis Gutierrez** (D-IL), **Brian Higgins** (D-NY), **Tim Holden** (D-PA), **Sheila Jackson-Lee** (D-TX), **Marcy Kaptur** (D-OH), **Dennis J. Kucinich** (D-OH), **Tom Lantos** (D-CA), **James Leach** (R-IA), **Dan Lipinski** (D-IL), **Carolyn McCarthy** (D-NY), **Thaddeus McCotter** (R-MI), **Michael R. McNulty** (D-NY), **Frank Pallone Jr.** (D-NJ), **Bill Pascrell Jr.** (D-NJ), **Bobby Rush** (D-IL), **Janice D. Schakowsky** (D-IL), **John Shimkus** (R-IL), **Christopher H. Smith** (R-NJ), **Peter J. Visclosky** (D-IN), **Diane E. Watson** (D-CA), and **Robert Wexler** (D-FL).

All of the honored Members of Congress were selected based on their involvement as sponsors or cosponsors in legislative initiatives of benefit to Polish Americans and Poland. These initiatives included corresponding efforts by both the House and the Senate (the inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program, a US-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program, Honorary Citizenship for General Pulaski, Resolution Recognizing the Accomplishments of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and Resolution Recognizing the 25th Anniversary Strikes in Poland in 1980 and the Birth of Solidarity). The specific initiative in the U.S. Senate was a resolution designating December 13, 2006 as a "Day of Remembrance"; while in the U.S. House, those included: The Congressional Poland Caucus, Congressional Caucus on Central and Eastern Europe, and Support for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Attending the event, *to personally accept* the award from the President of the Polish American Congress, Mr. Frank Spula, who together with the National Executive Director, Mr. Les Kuczynski, flew in from Chicago for the occasion, were: Representatives **Shelley Berkley**, **Rahm Emanuel**, **Paul Kanjorski**, **Marcy Kaptur**, **Dennis Kucinich**, **Daniel Lipinski**, **Janice Schakowsky**, and **Paul Visclosky**. Other honorees, whose many commitments prevented their participation in person, were represented by their staff members.

The reception held on Capitol Hill in the Rayburn Building attracted a hundred plus gathering composed of: Members of U.S. Congress, representatives of the diplomatic community, including His Excellency **Janusz Reiter** of the Embassy of Poland, H.E. **András Simonyi**, the Ambassador of Hungary and Dr. **Kornelija Jurgaitiene**, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Lithuania for the United States and Mexico, members of the Washington Metro Division of the Polish American Congress, representatives of the Polish American Congress National Executive Committee: Dean Anthony J. Bajdek, Vice President for American Affairs, Mr. Ludwik Wn kowicz, Vice President for Polish Affairs (who donated all of the book awards), Mr. Jerzy Ró alski, Vice President for Public Relations, and Mr. Wallace Zieli ski, Secretary, along with members of the Central East European Coalition, and friends of Polonia and Poland, as well as other Polish American Congress members from the northeast. Polish American Congress President Frank J. Spula, accompanied by Mr. Les Kuczy ski and Dr. Barbara Borzuchowska Andersen, Director of Research in the PAC Washington Office, met in private meetings with Senator **Richard Durbin**, Senator **Chuck Hagel**, and with Representative **Daniel Lipinski**. The meetings covered issues of the greatest concern to the Polish American Congress and Polonia, such as the inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program, immigration problems, promotion of trade of goods from Poland, and double taxation of retired Polish Americans ho moved to Poland.

9. FRIENDS OF ALICJA ALTENBERGER DONATE \$1,500 FOR A COMMEMORATIVE WINDOW

IN THE POLISH CENTER OF DISCOVERY AND LEARNING AT ELMS COLLEGE IN CHICOPEE, MASSACHUSETTS HONORING HER MEMORY

Alicja Altenberger (1945-2005), a Research Librarian in Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, had been a Vice President of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts, Inc., the Executive Editor of its once quarterly publication, *The Life of Polonia*, a National Director of the Polish American Congress, and a Founding Vice President of the American Association of the Friends of Kościuszko at West Point, Inc. The contributors to the fund for the commemorative window were Cynthia and Anthony Bajdek of Holliston, MA; Barbara and Edward Bęska of Staten Island, NY; Elbieta and Ferdynand Dębowski of Woburn, MA; Frances X. Gates of Brooklyn, NY; Francis C. Kajencki of El Paso, TX; Rena and John Lamparski of Cambridge, MA; Michael A. Peszke of Wakefield, RI; Maria E. Rupp of Watertown, MA; Miriam Rykles of Cambridge, MA; Stanisław K. Smardz of Haverhill, MA; Alexandra and William Watkins of Boston, MA; and Frederick S. Zimnoch of Northampton, MA. Formal dedication of the commemorative window will take place in the spring of 2007.

10. ANNUAL RENEWAL OF DUES

It is that time of year once again for renewing annual dues which remain at \$35 for an individual and \$60 for an organization, 80% of which is remitted to the National Office. The Board of Directors relies on your financial support, thanks you for it, and guarantees a careful stewardship of your financial generosity, thereby enabling it to fulfill the mission of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts. Your continued support, interest, and participation in the annual events organized by PAC/E. Mass. and other Polonia organizations guarantees the health and survival of *polskość* (Polishness) in this corner of America.

11. CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2007

- January 13, 2007 **Monthly Meeting of PAC/E. Mass. Board of Directors**, 440 Egan Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA starting at 9:30 a.m.
- February 4, 2007 **Tadeusz Kościuszko Day Commemorative Wreath Laying Ceremony**, Public Garden, Boston, MA starting at 2:00 p.m.
- February 10, 2007 **Monthly Meeting of PAC/E. Mass. Board of Directors**, 440 Egan Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA starting at 9:30 a.m.
- February 18, 2007 **Sixth Annual Kościuszko's Birthday – Washington's Birthday Political Forum and Banquet**, Henderson House Conference Center of Northeastern University, Weston, MA, starting at 1:00 p.m. (See www.paceasternmass.org for details.)
- March 10, 2007 **Monthly Meeting of PAC/E. Mass. Board of Directors**, 440 Egan Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, starting at 9:30 a.m.
- April 14, 2007 **Monthly Meeting of PAC/E. Mass. Board of Directors**, 440 Egan Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, starting at 9:30 a.m.
- April 20-21, 2007 **Fourth Annual Tadeusz Kościuszko Conference** of the American Association of the Friends of Kościuszko at West Point and **One Hundred Seventy-Ninth National Tadeusz Kościuszko Observance**, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. Both events are organized by the Association in concert with the United States Military Academy. (For further details, see www.kosciuszkoatwestpoint.org)
- May 3, 2007 **Observance of Poland's Constitution of May 3, 1791**, State House, Boston, MA, starting at 10:30 a.m. (Location of room and other related details to be announced.)

13. A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING POLISH AMERICANS AND POLONIA ORGANIZATIONS IN STATES NOT HAVING DIVISIONS OF THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

As described in article 2 above, *Task Force Raclawice* has been created for the express purpose of identifying both individuals and organizations in states listed below not having Divisions or Chapters of the Polish American Congress who might be willing to engage their state legislatures to pass Visa Waiver for Poland Resolutions. You can help in the effort if you have friends or relatives, or know of Polonia organizations in those states. If you do, simply *circle* the particular state or states, and provide the name and address of the individual or organization (by state if you know of individuals and organization in more than one state. Then simply mail this completed page to the address at the bottom of the page.

Alabama ---- Alaska ---- Arkansas ---- Colorado ---- Georgia ---- Hawaii ----

Idaho ---- Iowa ---- Kansas ---- Kentucky ---- Louisiana ---- Minnesota ----

Mississippi ---- Missouri ---- Montana ---- Nevada ---- New Hampshire ----

New Mexico ---- North Carolina ---- North Dakota ---- Oklahoma ----

South Carolina ---- South Dakota ---- Tennessee ---- Utah ---- Virginia ----

Washington ---- West Virginia ---- Wyoming ----

I submit (in printed form rather than longhand) to the Polish American Congress the name(s) of the following individuals and/or organizations in the state(s) noted above that I know of who might be interested in enlisting support in their state legislatures for sponsorship and passage of Visa Waiver for Poland Resolutions:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City/State/ZIP</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>

My name is: _____

NOTE: Please mail this to: **Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts**
360 Huntington Avenue, PMB 140SC – 182
Boston, MA 02115

And a final request: If you would like to receive future Newsletters and Bulletins by e-mail, please provide us your e-mail address: _____ (please print legibly)

Thanks for your help!

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia!