



NEWSBRIEF

January 2010

A FIRST-IN-THE-NATION ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS OCCURS IN MASSACHUSETTS IN DECEMBER 2009

Prior to December 10 and 14, 2009 four statutory Polonia and Poland-related observances existed under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 6, Sections:

- 12B **Anniversary of the Death of General Pułaski**
- 12R **Polish Constitution Day**
- 12BB **Tadeusz Kościuszko Day**
- 15WWW **Polish American Heritage Month**

Each of the foregoing had been the work of the Polish American Congress of Massachusetts in concert with the Massachusetts legislature which enacted them, and the governors who approved them post-1945 and into the 1990s.

On December 10, 2009 Dean Anthony J. Bajdek, President of the Polish American Congress of Eastern Massachusetts and National Vice President for American Affairs added yet another hallmark achievement under Massachusetts General Laws when the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives enacted bill H. 3035, the idea of which he proposed, to create yet another Chapter 6 law, under Section:

- 15MMMM **Polish American Congress Day**

the related text of which reads:

"The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart October thirtieth as Polish American Congress Day, in recognition of the capacity of the Polish American Congress established in 1944 to represent the domestic and international concerns of Americans of Polish descent at both the state and federal levels of government in the United States, and recommending that said day be observed in an appropriate manner by the people."

Subsequent to enactment by both branches of the legislature on December 10, Governor Deval Patrick affixed his signature of approval to the document on December 14 at precisely 6:01 p.m.

In keeping with the theme that Bajdek had spoken about this past year from Boston to Chicago, and from Buffalo to Hartford, for example, that theme being “Ensuring National Political Leadership for Polish Americans in the 21st Century,” he has demonstrated yet another practical benefit of a planned strategy and objectives approach in keeping matters relating to the interests of Polish Americans and Poland at the forefront of state government in Massachusetts.

But this time, rather than working, for example, for the successful passage of legislation commemorating such notables and events of Polish history as Kazimierz Pułaski, Tadeusz Kościuszko, and the Constitution of May 3, 1791 as had been done during earlier decades in Massachusetts, Bajdek chose to honor by enactment of a state legislature on a statutory basis the importance of the Polish American Congress itself, which is a totally unprecedented achievement in the history of Polish Americans in the United States.

Under Massachusetts General Laws, there are now 165 statutory laws included in Chapter 6, some examples of which are **Pearl Harbor Day, Loyalty Day, Evacuation Day, Boy Scout Week, Veterans’ Day, Bunker Hill Battle Anniversary Day,** and **Missing Children’s Day** that require the Governor to issue an automatic annual Proclamation.

Of the 165 Chapter 6 Laws, 26 were driven by interested ethnic groups as follows:

- **Chapter 6: Section 12B. Anniversary of the Death of General Pułaski** (Polish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12H. Anniversary of the Death of General Lafayette** (Franco American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12I. American Indian Heritage Week** (Native American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12R. Polish Constitution Day** (Polish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12S. Peter Francisco Day** (Italian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12Z. Jamaican Independence Day** (Jamaican American)
- **Chapter 6: Chapter 12BB. Tadeusz Kościuszko Day** (Polish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12GG. Lithuanian Independence Day** (Lithuanian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12II. Slovak Independence Day** (Slovakian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 12VV. Native American Day** (Native American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15J. Italian American War Veterans of the United States Day** (Italian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15T. Kalevala Day** (Finnish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15U. Justice for Ireland Day** (Irish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15II. Armenian Martyrs’ Day** (Armenian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15OO. Saint Jean de Baptiste Day** (Franco American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15RR. Greek Independence Day** (Greek American)

- **Chapter 6: Section 15YY. Leif Ericson Day** (Scandinavian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15QQQ. Caribbean Week** (Caribbean American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15WWW. Polish American Heritage Month** (Polish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15EEEE. Italian American Heritage Month** (Italian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15FFFF. Irish American Heritage Month** (Irish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15GGGG. Portuguese American Heritage Month** (Portuguese American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15QQQQ. Tartan Day** (Scottish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15WWWW. Armenian American Heritage Month** (Armenian American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 15MMMM. Polish American Congress Day** (Polish American)
- **Chapter 6: Section 157. American and Canadian French Cultural Exchange Commission** (Franco American)

Whereas earlier Presidents of the Polish American Congress in Massachusetts had been responsible for proposing legislative enactment of the **Anniversary of the Death of General Pułaski Day, Polish Constitution Day, Tadeusz Kościuszko Day, and Polish American Heritage Month** by the Massachusetts legislature, the enactment of **Polish American Congress Day** in the Commonwealth is the distinctive product of the relentless work of Dean Bajdek.

Bajdek is quick to point out that Polish Americans in Massachusetts initiated and achieved successful passage of more Chapter 6 laws than any other ethnic group in the Commonwealth, with those having secured more than one Chapter 6 law being:

- 5 = Polish Americans
- 3 = Franco Americans
- 3 = Italian Americans
- 2 = Armenian Americans
- 2 = Irish Americans
- 2 = Native Americans

With all other ethnic groups (e.g., Finnish Americans, Greek Americans, Jamaican Americans, Lithuanian Americans, Scottish Americans, Slovakian Americans) who initiated the Chapter 6 laws above achieving only one such law apiece, Polish Americans in Massachusetts are unique when it comes to Chapter 6 laws. Dean Bajdek readily acknowledges that **Polish American Congress Day** would not have become a reality without the related legislative work on Beacon Hill of his friend, Representative John W. Scibak (B.A, M.A., Ph.D., University of Notre Dame), whose legislative constituency is in the 2nd Hampshire District made up of the towns of Easthampton, Hadley, and South Hadley.

It is the pleasant obligation and task for future generations of Polish American leaders in the Commonwealth to add to this unique distinction under Chapter 6 laws.

As the foregoing illustrates, nothing is impossible if strategically planned and executed. In this regard, please support *your* Polish American Congress.