

# POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

The Polish American Congress (PAC) was founded in May 1944 when representatives of the Polish American community met in Buffalo, NY to create a national organization. The founders envisioned an entity that would represent the interests of Polish Americans in the United States and continue the struggle for a free, democratic, and independent Poland.

Today, the Polish American Congress is an “umbrella” organization – a federation of more than 3,000 Polish American organizations, clubs, and veterans’ groups. The individual membership is organized into twenty-nine State Divisions and nine Chapters. In the aggregate, there are more than one million members of the PAC nationally. The organization maintains offices in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

## MISSION

The Polish American Congress adopted two complementary agendas: the Polish one - to help Poland in its great hour of need, and the American one - to unite the Polish American Community and to aid its members to become better- informed American citizens.

Today, after World War II, the Solidarity Movement, and the fall of Communism, the PAC continues to represent the interests of the Polish American Community by:

**Promoting knowledge** about Polish Americans and the Polish American community, its history, accomplishments and contributions

**Closely monitoring U.S. legislation and policies** that could directly or indirectly affect Polish Americans, e.g. the inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program, section 245(i), H1-B Visas, the Diversity Visa Lottery, and Immigration Reform

**Informing PAC members and friends of Polonia about specific legislative developments and, where relevant, organizing a unified response from the Polish American community**

**Supporting the bilateral trade relationship between the United States and Poland** and promoting business development beneficial to both nations

**Coordinating major Polish American efforts aimed at affecting legislation** of importance to Poland and to the Polish American community, e.g. NATO expansion, inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program

**Supporting educational and cultural activities** in the Polish American community

**Providing educational and development opportunities for Polish American students**, e.g. providing an internship program in the Washington, D.C. office

**Opposing examples of bigotry aimed at Polish Americans and at Poland** – from crude Polish jokes and distortions of Polish history, e.g. inaccurate and misleading historical accounts such as “Polish concentration camps,” to outright discrimination against Poles

**Promoting successful bilateral relations between the United States and Poland** in the spheres of government, education, business, and healthcare by sponsoring contact between U.S. and Polish community leaders and institutions

**Providing charitable relief to Poland**, especially in response to natural disasters —most recently, floods -- with special attention to the needs of children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly

**Promoting cultural, political, and religious dialogue with other ethnic and racial groups in the United States.**