

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.