

Visa Waiver for Poland - We need your HELP!

Background:

For years, Poland and Polish Americans have pursued Poland's admission into the Visa Waiver Program to no avail. Earlier this year, legislation known as the JOLT ACT was introduced in the US House of Representatives that would pave the way for the elimination of tourist visas for a number of countries that meet strict travel and border protection criteria including Poland. Shortly after it was introduced, Polish Americans across the country have launched an unprecedented effort to build support for the passage of H.R. 1401, also known as the JOLT ACT, and ensure that the bill acquires as many cosponsors as possible.

How you can help:

1. Find out who your Representative is and if they are already a cosponsor of the bill. You can look up who your Representative is by clicking here: <http://whomyrepresentative.com> (For now we are only looking at members of the House of Representatives as there is no version of the bill in the US Senate just yet).
Once you know who your representative is, you can check if they are already a cosponsor of the bill by clicking here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1401/cosponsors>.
If your Representative is already a cosponsor, you can still help by circulating this memo and by reaching out to friends, coworkers, family members and Polish American organizations and asking them to connect with their Representatives. You can also reach out to other Representatives you may know or have a relationship with their staff.
2. The most effective way to get your Representative's attention is to call his/her office and ask for a meeting. Explain that the Polish American community is supporting H.R. 1401 and that you and other members of the community would like to meet with the Congressman / Congresswoman to discuss. If such a meeting cannot be set up, ask to meet with one of their staff. This is just as effective as you will then have a point of contact with whom you can stay in touch and get updates. If you do not get a commitment that your Representative will cosponsor the bill at the meeting, be sure to ask when you can follow up. If you learn that your Representative will not cosponsor the bill, be sure to ask what the source of their objections is.
3. If you do not have the time to set up a meeting, call your Representative's office. Explain that you and the Polish American community are supporting H.R. 1401. Ask where the Congressman / Congresswoman stands on the issue and if you can count on their support. Please remember that even if you don't get an answer over the phone, take down the name of the staffer you spoke with and ask when you can follow up. This is very important as sometimes the bill can be "stuck" with a legislative aid and the Representative might not be aware of it. If that is the case, this kind of outreach puts it on their radar.
4. The easiest thing you can do is to write a letter to your Representative in Congress urging him / her to support the JOLT ACT. The Polish American Communication Initiative, a project of the PIAST Institute, has set up an online tool by means of which you can send a letter to your Representative in Congress by entering your zip code and utilizing a built in letter template. This tool can be accessed by clicking here: <http://cgrcengage.com/piast/app/write-a-letter?4&engagementId=16880> .
5. You can promote both the JOLT ACT and Visa Waiver for Poland by using the hashtag #VWP4PL. You can share pictures from meetings, updates and help build awareness and momentum around the issue.
6. Please report what progress you have been able to make with your Representative or what obstacles you have encountered to the contact information below. This information will be shared with everyone who is a part of this effort so that we can all be aware of our collective progress and what challenges we are encountering along the way.

Contact Information:

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