

**O**n this 29th day of September, 2012, to the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties, we submit the following document of policy, based on issues of consensus to our community of over 10 million Polish Americans.

### **Jobs**

The American-Polish community in the United States is numerically concentrated in the New York/Connecticut/New Jersey, Chicago, and “rust-belt” areas which have been disproportionately adversely affected by the current and prior economic recessions and migration of manufacturing jobs overseas. We urge and support proactive government efforts to stimulate job growth through infrastructure projects, small business incentives, and support to local governments for vital educational and essential services.

### **Tax Reform**

Our government debt and deficit is not sustainable. We urge concerted government action to reduce the budget deficit while honoring our commitments to senior citizens. No government agency should be exempt from the full burden of budget reductions. We recognize that the current tax system will have

to be adjusted to address these critical issues and we recognize that we must all share the burden. However, proposals for a flat tax or national sales tax would unfairly shift the tax burden to the middle class which includes most Americans of Polish descent, measures that we therefore cannot support.

### **Immigration Reform**

As all other non-native Americans who trace their ancestry to other countries, we continue to believe in the value of maintaining a generous legal immigration policy focused on family unification.

We support the humane treatment of all migrants by government authorities and condemn efforts to stigmatize foreign looking or foreign sounding residents through discriminatory identification and other police checks.

We support the regularization of immigration status to those migrants who have a proven track record of honest work and have no serious criminal convictions. Those who have committed serious crimes should be brought to justice and deported.

With the current high unemployment rate and the difficulties faced by recent college graduates in finding professional employment, we must ensure that temporary worker

visas, especially in the technical and professional fields, are not used to depress wages and do not displace available qualified Americans. At the same time, while recognizing the value of exchange programs, we are deeply concerned about the use of the Summer Work and Travel Program to replace American workers and about the significant abuses of this program.

One in four Poles has family in the United States. The Visa Waiver Program for temporary visits to the United States should be immediately extended to include Poland. Of the 36 countries, including almost all of Europe, currently in the Visa Waiver Program, the exclusion of Poland, a country that has been in the forefront of support for the U.S. war on terror including fielding large military contingents in both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, is striking, and should be immediately corrected. Entry into the Visa Waiver program is at the discretion of the U.S. government; this discretion should be exercised forthwith.

#### **National Security**

As our military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down, resulting in necessary decreases in defense expenditures, we support continued vigilance and defense


readiness worldwide. Our commitment to an Atlantic alliance should be at the core of our national security policy. While insisting that European countries bear their fair share of the burden, we must maintain a credible NATO organization in response to an increasingly assertive and belligerent Russia. Russian attempts to divide European resolve or weaken NATO through alternative security alliances should be firmly resisted. At the same time we welcome positive initiatives from Russia in acknowledging its difficult past that included acts of state terrorism [such as the Katyn Massacre]. Such acknowledgements can only strengthen Russian democracy and benefit its security.

#### **Trade**

We support continued efforts to increase trade and mutual business development between Poland and the United States. Poland is an attractive partner for U.S. firms seeking a foothold in the European market.

#### **Representation in Government**

The under-representation in government of Americans of Polish descent, both in the professional and political ranks, should be addressed without resorting to tokenism. We urge the Administration to task the



Office of Personnel Management to conduct a survey of government employees in the major metropolitan areas to verify that Americans of Polish descent are underrepresented nationally and in key metropolitan areas. Without the use of quotas, programs to address any imbalance should be promptly initiated to attract qualified Americans of Polish descent to government service with yearly public progress reports. The Administration should also make a specific concerted effort to target qualified Americans of Polish descent for senior level professional and political appointments.

To accurately gauge important issues of future immigration, inclusion and representation, it is important our national census properly account for the ethnicities of all Americans. We urge the Administration to restore the tracking of detailed ethnic background statistics on all future census counts and to take remedial measures to address this deficiency in the 2010 census.

*The American Polish Platform seeks a nationwide discussion of Polonia issues. Please take this document home and share it with your community. Help us raise awareness of our Polish-American issues among our elected representatives at all levels.*