



# *Polish American Congress, Inc.*



**Washington Metropolitan Area Division**

<http://www.pacwashmetrodiv.org>

November 3, 2006

The Honorable Michael S. Steele  
Candidate for United States Senate  
3611 Branch Avenue, Suite 206  
Temple Hills, MD 20748

Dear Mr. Steele:

As you are a candidate to the United States Senate, I am writing you regarding issues that are of key importance to the 200,000 strong Polish American community in Maryland. For the Polish Americans in Maryland, the current state of the U.S.-Polish relationship, the need for Poland to join the Visa Waiver Program, recognition of Polish accomplishments in the United States, and an increased role for Polish Americans in government at all levels are key issues. Your views on these matters will play a significant role in whether or not Polish Americans will vote for you on November 7.

First and foremost, Polish Americans in Maryland are deeply concerned about the state of relations between the United States and Poland. While Poland has been an excellent NATO ally for nearly ten years, supported the War on Terrorism, participated in several peacekeeping operations (Kosovo, Lebanon), and been a strong partner for U.S. foreign policy, the relationship with our country has not lived up to its potential. Polish Americans want this relationship to become stronger, deeper, and more unique. Poland is not just another European country: it is America's best friend in Europe. Yet, this support has not been reciprocated in American policy. In particular, Polish Americans want our country to provide more military assistance to Poland, renew science cooperation, and increase government-facilitated people-to-people contacts between our country and Poland.

Secondly, Polish Americans in Maryland want to see an end to the humiliating and unfair practice of requiring visas for Poles to visit America. While regulations requiring that Polish citizens obtain visas were necessary when Poland was still under Communist domination, times have changed. The Polish people threw off the Communist yoke 17 years ago. Poland is now one of the most pro-U.S. NATO allies we have and Poles pose no security threat to the U.S. We want to see Poland added to the Visa Waiver Program, to which the vast majority of European Union member states belong (Poland joined the EU in 2003). Quite simply, visa requirements need to be lifted.

Thirdly, Maryland's Polish American community wants Polish contributions to America to receive more recognition. One concrete matter that, if elected, you will be able to support is Congressional action to grant posthumously U.S. citizenship to Revolutionary War hero General Casimir Pulaski. Another important matter is issuance of a postage stamp to honor Matthew Urban, the U.S. soldier who received the most combat medals during the Second World War.

Fourthly, Polish Americans in Maryland are concerned about the lack of Polish Americans in prominent government positions. This is especially notable in the Cabinet, where despite a large number of talented Polish Americans with public service experience, a Polish American last held a Cabinet position under President Reagan. If you are elected, we urge you to consider hiring Polish Americans to your staff and support the appointment of qualified Polish Americans.

Your views on these issues are important and I will share them with the Polish American community in Maryland so that they can make an informed decision on November 7.

Respectfully Yours,

Susanne S. Lotarski, Ph.D.  
President  
Washington Metropolitan Area Division  
Polish American Congress