Briefing on Status of Ukraine’s veterans

On March 11th, the United States Congress witnessed a briefing dedicated to the plight of Ukrainian veterans: those currently serving on the frontlines as well as those returning from war. The honorary co-hosts of the event were the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus and the Senate Ukraine Caucus, while the list of event sponsors included: the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the Pylyshenko Family Foundation, the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee (UUARC), the Embassy of Ukraine in the USA, and the Ukrainian American Community Foundation of the Ukrainian Federal Credit Union, as well as OliaFilm.

UCCA Executive Vice President and Ukrainian National Information Service (UNIS) Director, Michael Sawkiw, Jr., moderated the panel discussion, which brought together religious hierarchy and clergy, government officials from Ukraine, U.S Members of Congress, NGO representatives, U.S. administration officials, and the Ukrainian American Veterans (UAV).

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus was introduced and reiterated that the war in Ukraine is not just a “Ukrainian war, but a war against democracy in Europe and worldwide.” Ukraine’s ambassador to the United States, Volodymyr Yelchenko, related the stark reality of a “hot war” in Europe, with all its “ceasefires,” has brutally taken the lives of over 14,000 individuals and internally displaced millions more throughout the country.

As the founder and commander of the volunteer Hospitaliers Medical Battalion, a tactical medicine battalion providing medical care at the frontline, current Member of Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada (Parliament), Yana Zinkevych, spoke of the NGO’s actions in administering medical treatment to those injured in the war and mentioned that the war in eastern Ukraine is between “good and evil” forces and warned that others may be in the path of future Russian aggressive measures. Deputy Minister for Veterans, within the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs, Oleksandr Tereshchenko, was passionate in his plea that the Ukrainian government’s major role in the rehabilitation of Ukrainian veterans is to reintegrate them into society so that they can become “assets” and not a liability on society. While in the military, Tereshchenko defended the Donetsk airport in October 2014 and suffered major injuries in a mine explosion.

Of particular interest were presentations by two Ukrainian military chaplains – Bishop Stepan Sus of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Rev. Sviatoslav Yurkiv of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Both religious leaders spoke of their administering ministering services to those on the frontlines. Other presenters at the congressional briefing included Marta Pyrovarenko, psychologist, mental health expert, and co-founder of the Development Foundation non-governmental organization; Katja Kolcio, PhD, Associate Professor at Wesleyan University and member of Development Foundation; Vitaliy Harechko of Development Foundation; Christi Anne Hofland, IREX Senior Program Officer; and Roman Fontana and Darren Holowka, PhD, on behalf of the Ukrainian American Veterans (UAV).

#CoronaVirus — Stay Informed & Stay Updated

Based on the guidance being issued by the White House, the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UCCA supports the initiative by local Ukrainian American organizations to postpone community events and activities indefinitely, or else move to have these online. The health and well-being of our Ukrainian American community is and should always be a priority for our community’s leadership.

According to the CDC (coronavirus.gov), the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Avoid in-person gatherings to minimize and hopefully prevent the spread of the virus.

Please visit UCCA’s Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/UCCA.org for continuously updated closings and cancellations in the Ukrainian American community due to the #CoronaVirus.
2020 Census — it’s not too late to be counted!

Although Census Day is April 1, it is not too late to be counted! As we are all legally obligated to participate in the census, you can participate until the end of the tabulation period, which is the end of July. The 2020 United States Census might not be the first online American census, it will be America’s first digital census.

This year, American households will receive a 12-digit census ID number in the mail, instructing you to visit www.my2020census.gov to participate in the census.

However, you may still respond to your census letter by mail or phone.

UCCA asks all members of the Ukrainian American community to fill out the space listed under Question No. 9 (RACE or ORIGIN) by writing in the word UKRAINIAN.

The more UKRAINIANs self-identify as such on the 2020 U.S. Census, the more our community will benefit. The statistics gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau determine how federal funding impacts communities each year, including the amount of funding that state governments and local communities receive from the federal government for the next decade.

Lithuania’s 30th Anniversary of Independence

On March 11th UCCA joined the Government of Ukraine in wishing the Republic of Lithuania a “Happy 30th Anniversary of renewed Independence!”

UCCA Chairs Ohio’s Nationalities Movement

On March 6th, UCCA President Andriy Futey, chaired a meeting of Representatives of the American Nationalities Movement of Ohio with Senator Rob Portman (R-OH).

The Nationalities Movement includes representatives of the Ukrainian, Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian, Slovenian, German, Lebanese, Latvian, Estonian, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Armenian, Croatian, Macedonian, Greek, Swiss, and Romanian communities.

UCCA Easter Greeting

During this time of the Resurrection of our Lord

the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America extends its warmest greetings, during these unprecedented times of the CoronaVirus,

to the Hierarchies of the Ukrainian Churches, the Leadership of the Ukrainian World Congress, the Executive Boards of our member organizations, the boards and members of our UCCA branches and Ukrainians throughout the world

and sends its best wishes for a very Healthy and Blessed Easter!

Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!

Michael Sawkiw, Jr., UCCA Vice President and Director of the Ukrainian National Information Service (left) and H.E. Volodymyr Yelchenko, Ukraine’s Ambassador to the United States (far left), join H.E. Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Lithuania’s Ambassador to the United States (center) at the Library of Congress to commemorate Lithuania’s Independence.