

“UKRAINIAN DAYS” HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ‘UKRAINE FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT’

On March 4, the Ukrainian National Information Service (UNIS) organized the first in what will most-likely become a series of advocacy events on Capitol Hill, with the intent of promoting the Ukrainian community’s concerns about the slow, if not negligible, implementation of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, as well as establishing better contacts with its elected representatives in Washington. Nearly fifty community activists from around the U.S. participated in the event, which began with an opportunity to experience a congressional hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee entitled “Ukraine Under Siege.” Following Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Victoria Nuland’s testimony, members of Congress questioned her about the Administration’s implementation of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, military assistance to Ukraine, and additional sanctions against Russia.

During the day, community representatives split into groups and held meetings with their various congressional and senatorial offices, among them: Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ); Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH); Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY); Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ); Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ); Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY); Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH); Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ); Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY); Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA); Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH); Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-NY); Rep. Robert Brady (D-PA); Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA); Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY); Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA), co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus; Rep. Michael Hanna (R-NY); Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA); Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-VA); Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY); Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC); Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA); Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY); Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA); Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH); Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC); Sen. Patrick Toomey (R-PA); Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY); and, Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC).

A special meeting was arranged with Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, at which UNIS Director Michael Sawkiw, Jr. and Andrew Horbachewsky, Chairman of the Board of the SUM-A Yonkers FCU, presented the Congressman with the “Friend of UNIS” award. The award is an opportunity to recognize and thank those who have provided leadership and unwavering support of the Ukrainian American community’s concerns.



The successful advocacy event concluded with an evening reception at the Embassy of Lithuania, where “Ukrainian Days” participants were warmly welcomed by Lithuania’s ambassador to the United States, H.E. Zygimantis Pavilionis. The ambassador urged the guests to continue their advocacy efforts and filmed a short video clip with those present entitled, “We believe in freedom.” The video was broadcast throughout Lithuania to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCiVRym-Os&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

UNIS Director Michael Sawkiw, Jr. then presented two “Friend of UNIS” awards to Ambassador Pavilionis and the Central and East European Coalition (the CEEC embodies 18 national ethnic organizations that represent nearly 22 million Americans of Central and East European descent) for their staunch support of Ukraine. Guests also had an opportunity to hear about the role of volunteers in defending Ukraine’s territorial sovereignty and independence from Mr. Ivan Rodichenko, a volunteer with the 25th Volunteer Battalion “Kyiv Rus.” Following the formal presentations, “Ukrainian Days” participants were hosted to traditional Lithuanian fare, and sampled Lithuanian beverages and Georgian wine.

Due to an early March snow storm in the Washington, DC area that closed the U.S. federal government, the March 5th “Rally to Support Ukraine” was postponed.

**The rescheduled date of the “Rally to Support Ukraine” is set for
Thursday, March 26th from 1:00-4:00PM!**

2015 UKRAINIAN NATIONAL FUND (UNF)

Today the focus of Ukrainian communities worldwide is fixed on the ongoing war in Ukraine. Since the conflict began, the Ukrainian nation has seen tremendous historical upheavals from revolution, to illegal annexation, to outright invasion! Today, the conflict rages on in Ukraine as Russia persists in its aggression, and the West remains on the sidelines, unwilling to take a firm stand.

Yet, for all the horror and destruction that Ukraine has endured, the people have remained undeniably steadfast in their stand against Russian aggression. Ukrainian citizens have given of themselves and sacrificed without reservation during this particularly difficult war, so that Ukraine can remain a free and democratic nation. The admirable bravery and unquestionable fortitude of the Ukrainian people continue to inspire the world today as they battle for freedom against Russia and Russian-backed terrorists in Eastern Ukraine... The war, however, has taken a great toll on the Ukrainian nation. Thousands have perished; many have been wounded, displaced or orphaned. Cities, towns and villages alike have been decimated... As members of the Ukrainian American community, we are honor-bound to help the people of Ukraine during this time of crisis by all means available to us. We are their voice before Congress, the Administration, the American people and the world. Both as Ukrainians and as Americans we understand the immeasurable value of freedom. As Ukrainians we know Ukraine's history, and understand the price Ukraine has paid under Russian, and later Soviet occupation. As Americans, we enjoy life in a society where everyone is entitled to natural and inalienable rights that are guaranteed to us. Our unique composition enables us to truly grasp the situation in Ukraine and understand the real cost should Ukraine's independence be lost.

The UCCA has worked continuously to be at the forefront of events as they unfold in Ukraine. From the very beginning the UCCA has closely monitored the situation in Ukraine and has persistently brought the plight of our fellow Ukrainians to the attention of U.S. government officials, the media and the greater American community. The UCCA has continuously and strongly urged the US government to deepen the political, economic and diplomatic isolation of Russia; initiated numerous acts including the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, helped raise thousands of dollars for Ukraine's soldiers as well as their families, met with numerous government officials, and been in constant contact with many members of Congress and the Administration to garner support for Ukraine; issued countless press releases and statements; given dozens of interviews to local, national and foreign press; helped organize humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian military and families of the fallen in Ukraine, and; through its branches nationwide, organized numerous protests, letter writing campaigns, Facebook posts, and twitter storms. Moreover, the UCCA deployed successful International Election Observer Missions, composed of over 300 volunteers, to observe the presidential and parliamentary elections. However, because the work of the UCCA is almost entirely dependent on the financial support of its members, we need your help to continue aiding Ukraine in this time of crisis. ***Our definitive moment is NOW!*** In our 75th year of service to the Ukrainian American community, the UCCA urges you to please donate generously to the Ukrainian National Fund (UNF). Without the necessary moral and financial support of dedicated and patriotic individuals who contribute annually to the UNF, the significant and timely work of the UCCA cannot be accomplished.

UCCA's 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Founded on May 24, 1940 during the height of WWII, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America has a storied history. For 75 years the UCCA has consistently affected the course of human events by finding the right friends to honor and support, the right ears to whisper into and the right moment to mobilize the Ukrainian American community into action. To learn more about the UCCA over the past 75 years, we will be highlighting various aspects of the UCCA's work in upcoming bulletins.

SAVE THE DATE — MAY 20TH
The UCCA Executive Board would like to inform its membership and the greater Ukrainian American community that on Wednesday, May 20th a celebratory Congressional Luncheon Reception will be held in Washington, DC to mark the 75th Anniversary of the UCCA. Details of the event will be forthcoming in next month's Bulletin.

UCCA ISSUES 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

In order to inform our membership and interested individuals about the work of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, the National Office has published its 2014 Annual Report. The report highlights the efforts of the UCCA, the Ukrainian National Information Service (UNIS), the UCCA's Washington, DC public relations bureau, and several of the UCCA's many active branches.

To receive a copy of the Annual Report, please contact the national office either by phone at (212)228-6840 or email at: tolexy@ucca.org.