UCCA President Travels to Ukraine with Senator Rob Portman

U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) visited Ukraine during the first week of April to meet with Ukraine’s President, other high-ranking officials and civil society leaders. The Senator also visited a combat outpost near the line of contact in Donetska to see firsthand the evidence of Russian aggression on the Eastern border.

Joining Sen. Rob Portman at several official meetings was his constituent, UCCA President Andriy Futey. Most notably, Mr. Futey participated in meetings with the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Andriy Parubiy. The Official U.S. Delegation was comprised of Sen. Portman and U.S. Ambassador Maria Yovanovitch. At the recommendation of Mr. Futey, the Senator also met with Acting Minister of Health Ulana Suprun to discuss the current status of the implementation of health care reforms and the efforts she has undertaken. Together, they voiced their strong support for her leadership.

“it was a distinct honor and privilege to accompany the Co-Chair of the Senate Ukraine Caucus during his visit to Kyiv. By including the UCCA in the high ranking meetings, the Senator demonstrated the strong partnership with our Ukrainian-American community and the importance of our organization”, said Futey. He added, “We are honored and proud that the President of Ukraine bestowed the Order of Merit for outstanding personal contribution into the strengthening of inter-state relations between Ukraine and the United States, defending the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.”

L to R: As UCCA President A. Futey and U.S. Ambassador M. Yanovich look on, President Poroshenko bestows the Order of Merit to Senator Portman, for his efforts in the U.S. Senate to provide assistance to Ukraine. President Poroshenko thanked the Senator for his efforts in strengthening ties between the two countries and for his support of Ukraine’s efforts to defend itself from Russian aggression.

On the UCCA’s recommendation, Senator Portman and Ambassador Yovanovitch met with Acting Minister of Health, with whom UCCA is proud to stand with and support.

Together, Senator Portman and UCCA President Andriy Futey paid respect to and laid flowers at the Memorial Wall to the ATO Victims as well as the National Holodomor-Genocide Memorial in Kyiv. Senator Portman is Co-Sponsor of Senate Resolution 435, commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor.

While in Ukraine, Mr. Futey also traveled to City of Ternopil and met with Mayor Serhiy Nadal. Together they discussed the formation of a Sister City Relationship between Ternopil and Parma, Ohio. Both Cities have expressed a desire for such a relationship and the Parma Ukrainian-American community is looking forward to welcoming the Mayor of Ternopil to visit the community in late May.

Remembering Chornobyl

Thirty-two years ago, the worst nuclear disaster in history resulted from the ruthless exploitation of Ukraine and its people by an imperialistic Russian regime that continuously manifests a callous disregard for human life. Releasing 400 times more radioactive material than the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, the explosion in the early morning hours of April 26, 1986, caused irreparable harm to Ukraine and its people.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest representation of Ukrainians in America, commemorates this tragedy annually, offering our prayers for all the victims killed by this tragedy and all those who continue to suffer from its effects. This year, we once again call upon the international community to join UCCA in ensuring that the ongoing needs of the victims are never forgotten. In light of Russia’s continued and blatant disregard for humanity, as evidenced by the consequences of their illegal occupation of Crimea and their ongoing aggression in Eastern Ukraine, we will continue our call for justice in the name of the Kremlin’s victims.

The explosion that occurred in the fourth reactor of the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant took place just 64 miles north of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv. It was only after radiation levels set off alarms at a nuclear power plant in Sweden two days later, that the Soviet authorities issued any acknowledgement of the disaster. The totalitarian communist regime, however, refused to provide any concrete details in an attempt to conceal the explosion’s magnitude. In its blatant disregard for human life, Moscow allowed thousands of innocent Ukrainians, including schoolchildren, oblivious to the dangers emanating from Chornobyl, to participate in the planned May Day parade five days following the explosion. The terrible impact of the Chornobyl disaster is still felt to this day, with adverse effects on the health of many people, not to mention the ecological and economic strains on the Ukrainian nation.

On this 32nd commemoration of that terrible tragedy at Chornobyl, let us never forget this crime against humanity that forever changed Ukraine and the world.
UCCA Calls on U.S. Officials & Sponsors to Boycott FIFA World Cup

Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the largest grassroots representation of Americans of Ukrainian descent, calls on high-ranking U.S. government officials, sports fans and leaders of industry, to follow the lead of the United Kingdom, Poland and Iceland, and boycott the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Furthermore, FIFA sponsors of the 2018 World Cup, including Adidas, Coca-Cola, Hyundai–Kia, VISA, Anheuser-Busch, and McDonald's, as well as U.S. broadcasters FOX Sports and Telemundo, should be informed of the inexcusable and illegal actions undertaken by Russia in the run-up to hosting soccer's biggest tournament.

“The United States needs to send a clear & loud message to Russia that there are consequences for not respecting international law and order,” stated UCCA President Andriy Futey. “We cannot tolerate this type of behavior and need to condemn the Russian Federation by boycotting the 2018 FIFA World Cup!”

UCCA maintains that it is morally reprehensible that an international sporting event designed to promote international goodwill and harmony will be held in a country that continues to blatantly disregard the rule of law:
- Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and the further invasion of Eastern Ukraine represent a daily violation of all conceivable international law and standards (with over 10,000 killed and over 2,000,000 displaced);
- On 17 July 2014, Russian forces shot down the civilian airliner Malaysian Airlines MH17, resulting in the deaths of 298 innocent victims, including one confirmed American citizen;
- On 4 March 2018 in Salisbury, England, former Russian agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were exposed along with an additional 48 people to a Russian nerve agent.

For these reasons and more, including the 100+ political prisoners held in Russian prisons, Russia stands against the values that unite the Euro Atlantic community. It is up to the rest of the world to unite in defense of the international order and bring the responsible parties to justice, not celebrate them with a soccer tournament.

Save the Dates: June 14th & July 18th

As has become tradition, UCCA together with the Center for US-Ukrainian Relations, will be hosting the sixth annual US-UA Working Group Summit: Providing Ukraine with an Annual Report Card. The full day conference that tackles Ukraine’s progress on various fronts will be held on Thursday, June 14th at the University Club in Washington, DC.

Over two dozen speakers will evaluate Ukraine’s progress/regress in six main areas, including: Democracy, Economy, Security, Energy, Social Cohesion, and National Identity. The conference’s working lunch will provide analysis on Why a Free, Stable and Prosperous Ukraine Still Matters from the Ukrainian government’s perspective; while closing remarks will explore the same question from the U.S. government’s point of view. The conference will conclude with remarks from the Tally Master who will provide Ukraine with its annual report card.

For more information, or to register for this conference, please contact the UCCA National Office either by phone at (212) 228-6840 or email to tolexy@ucca.org. The forum is free of cost, but seating is limited.

The next ‘Ukrainian Days’ advocacy event will be held on Wednesday, July 18th, in Washington, DC. The day-long event will feature an evening reception honoring retiring Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), co-founder of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus and long-time advocate of Ukrainian American issues. Details will be forthcoming in next month’s bulletin.

Ukrainian World Congress Annual May Appeal

Celebrating over 50 years, the Ukrainian World Congress, the international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the diaspora, is appealing for your support.

Traditionally May is the Fundraising month for the UWC, and as such, the UCCA, a founding and active member of the UWC, urges our Branches and members to donate generously to the UWC Fundraising Campaign to support their work on behalf of the 20 million strong diaspora.

Your tax-deductible donation to the UWC can be sent to the UCCA National Office located at:

UCCA
203 Second Avenue,
New York, NY 10003.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!