

## **Ukrainian Community Delegation attends Polish Constitution Day in Chicago**

(Chicago) On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the invitation of the Polish community, representing the Ukrainian community in Chicago, board members of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America – Illinois Division attended the annual Polish parade commemorating Polish Constitution Day. The Polish constitution, adopted in 1791, found inspiration from the text and philosophy of the Constitution that the United States had adopted less than four years earlier. It introduced elements of political equality that eventually became the basis of a more egalitarian social and political system.

Chicago is home to close to one million Poles. It is the second largest Polish city in the world, second after Poland's capital, Warsaw. The community, often referred to as Polonia, is a vibrant participant in city, county and state political, business and cultural life. A long list of city and state officials, and candidates for office were present at the brunch and at the parade that followed.

The Polish community has demonstrated strong support for Ukraine during the current political crisis in Ukraine. Representatives of the Consulate General of Poland and key Polish community organizations attended protests, conferences and presentations organized by the Ukrainian community in Chicago and expressed their outrage at Russian aggression. The collaborative approach also brought together Chicago's Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Tatar communities. The Ukrainian Congress Committee of American in Illinois continues to coordinate these efforts.

The Polish Constitution Day brunch took place at the beautiful ornate banquet hall of the Hilton hotel. Illinois senator Mark Kirk, governor Pat Quinn, state treasure Judy Barr Topinka, Cook County Commissioner Tony Preckwinckle, etc..... etc.... etc... attended and spoke at the podium.

Robert Rusiecki, deputy consul of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, and Andriy Pravednyk, consul general of Ukraine were asked to speak on behalf of Poland and Ukraine. Consul General Pravednyk thanked the Polish government and the local Polish community for their support of Ukraine at this time of Russian aggression. Deputy Consul Rusiecki made a strong statement of support for Ukraine, and warned of the repercussions of Russian aggression on world peace.

The formal morning session was followed by what has become one of Chicago's largest and most exciting parades on the lakefront of Lake Michigan at Chicago's Millennium Park. A large outdoor stage accommodated city, county, state officials, and Ukrainian representatives.

A press conference was held in the morning where the Russian invasion of Ukraine was the focus of questions from journalists, and the topic of Russian pressure on Ukraine's neighbors, including Poland was at the center of attention. The Russia-Ukraine issue was recognized as Putin's attempt to redefine the world order according to his own vision, where the west would be subject to Russian strategy of power.

Marta Farion  
Maria Kokatsch-Groschko  
vice-presidents of UCCA- Illinois Division