

# SUSPENSION

## **A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATOR PATRICK B. BURKE**

### **RE: Inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program**

**WHEREAS**, The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) allows citizens of participating countries to travel to the United States without a visa for stays of 90 days or less, as long as they meet all necessary requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, Poland is the only central European country not accepted into the United States Visa Waiver Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the emergence of the Polish economy has dramatically reduced the likelihood that Polish nationals will overstay their visa term; and

**WHEREAS**, including Poland in the Visa Waiver Program would improve U.S.–Poland relations; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 9 million Americans of Polish ancestry in the U.S. with Erie County having 168,000, one of the largest populations of Polish ancestry outside of Warsaw, Poland; and

**WHEREAS**, Poland has been a staunch ally of U.S. foreign policy over the past decade; and

**WHEREAS**, an increase in travel between U.S. and Poland could improve security because of the intelligence sharing agreements required by the Visa Waiver Program; and

**WHEREAS**, South Korea, which generates significantly more illegal immigration than Poland, was awarded Visa Waiver Program privilege; and

### **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, The Erie County Legislature implores the Bureau of Consular Affairs to improve the equitability of the Visa Waiver Program and allow for Poland to participate in the Visa Waiver Program; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that certified copies of this resolution are sent to the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Congressman Brian Higgins, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Senator Charles Schumer.

**Fiscal Impact: None to County**