JBANC recognizes House Baltic Caucus Members for their support

JBANC began a series of meetings this week with members of the House Baltic Caucus to thank and recognize them for their support for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The first such meetings were held on July 17 with long-time Caucus Member Rep. Henry Waxman of California and with the office of Congressman Dave Camp of Michigan. Both Caucus members are retiring at the end of this Session of Congress, together with Congressmen Mike Rogers of Michigan and Gary Miller of California.

During its meetings with Congressman Waxman and with Katelyn Wilcox of Rep. Camp’s office, JBANC discussed other issues of concern for the Baltic-American communities in the United States, including Putin’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine and threats to the Baltic countries. The Malaysian Airlines tragedy was also brought up.

The House Baltic Caucus currently has 52 Members, and is co-chaired by Congressmen John Shimkus (R-IL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA). JBANC plans on continuing outreach to the House Baltic Caucus throughout July, and will also be distributing letters to other Representatives encouraging them to consider joining the Caucus. Read more here: jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=2&id=64

OTHER INFO:
- July 21-25 - Captive Nations Week. JBANC’s Karl Altau will speak at the annual luncheon about plans for August 23 Black Ribbon Day commemorations.
- The documentary film about Belarus Free Theatre “Dangerous Acts Starring the Unstable Elements of Belarus” is still being broadcast on HBO. Watch trailer here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGALyS3O24 See the dates: jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=1&id=36

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The struggle continues - a few notes on the changing of the Baltic guard

Blog by JBANC’s President Saulius Kuprys
The Lithuanian American Council, Inc. (LAC), the Lithuanian component of JBANC, given the structure of JBANC governance, is completing its current leadership term. Long-time JBANC stalwart Henry Gaidis successfully led the JBANC board as its Chairman and I served as President.

It has been a busy year, especially in view of the continuing crisis in Ukraine fueled by the ongoing Putin-led violations of international law and abrogation of Russia’s own treaty commitments to the integrity of Ukraine’s territory and borders. Yesterday’s Malaysian airline tragedy only underscores the perilous situation which now has global implications.

I addressed a number of these rallies and conveyed greetings and a renewed dedication to freedom’s cause on behalf of not only LAC and JBANC but also on behalf of the Washington-based CEEC. Baltic solidarity with the Ukrainian community has been clearly in evidence this year and will continue to be so as long as the challenges continue.

Full blog here: jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=3&id=23

JBANC welcomes Mik Berzins to 2014 summer office staff

Mikēlis “Mik” Berzins is a Latvian-American currently residing in Corvallis, Oregon. Mik is originally from Maryland and attended the Latvian Sunday school in Rockville. Presently, he is a graduate student at Oregon State University, working towards a Masters degree in Public Policy with concentrations in international and environmental policy. He is also a recent graduate of The Ohio State University with a B.S. in Environment and Natural Resource Science specializing in fisheries and wildlife biology.

During this summer internship with JBANC, Mik will work on, among other tasks, a report investigating the recent increase in state-sponsored Russian propaganda and veiled antagonistic behavior focused on Ukraine and other countries.

The purpose of the report is to designate, dispel, and identify the most pervasive themes that make up the focus of current Russian disinformation schemes.

Read more: jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=3&id=22

Ukrainian-Americans award Members of Congress for their support of Ukraine

On July 16, a “Ukrainian Day” reception was held on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, at which Ukrainian-Americans honored Members of Congress and Lithuanian Ambassador Zygimantas Pavilionis for their active support of Ukraine during the “Revolution of Dignity.”

Seven Members of Congress and the Lithuanian Ambassador to the United States were honored for their support of Ukraine over the tumultuous past months. Four of them attended the ceremony to receive the awards and to make remarks. They were: Senators Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

Full story: jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=5&id=144

See pictures from the reception here: www.flickr.com/photos/114460987@N06/sets/72157645338448200/
The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) is a non-profit organization that monitors issues affecting Baltic-American communities in the United States and the nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. JBANC helps to coordinate Baltic-American activities in Washington, DC with the U.S. Congress, administration, NGO’s and other groups.

See more: jbanc.org/