



2024 Priorities of the Lithuanian American Community

The Lithuanian-American Community has been fearing, and warning, about Russian use of hybrid warfare for years. We urge all proactive steps to be taken to defeat Russia's aggression against its peaceful neighbors, including issues not specified below such as bolstering cybersecurity and combatting disinformation and kleptocracy.

Ukrainian Freedom and Sovereignty



We stand in unity with the Ukrainian people as they battle for freedom and sovereignty. We support every step to ensure Ukraine wins the War and regains the freedom of all land and people occupied by Russia, including by joining NATO.

Belarusian Freedom



We stand in unity with the Belarusian democratic opposition movement led by President Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who rightfully won the 2020 Belarusian presidential election. As Lithuanians, we are proud she continues her exiled opposition in Vilnius, Lithuania. We urge U.S. Senators to join the Free Belarus Caucus, led by Sens. Shaheen (D-NH) and Wicker (R-MS) and for Representatives to join the House Friends of Belarus Caucus, led by Reps. Kaptur (D-OH), Wilson (R-SC), Keating (D-MA), and Smith (R-NJ). We also support efforts such as the Strategic Dialogue between the U.S. and Belarus Democratic Movement.

Security Assistance



We strongly support the U.S. providing any and all military equipment necessary to Ukraine to defeat Russia.

We strongly support permanent U.S./NATO bases in the Baltic countries in coordination with Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) deployments underway in Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania. We also support necessary increases in funding for the Baltic Security Initiative (BSI), the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for the Baltic countries within the National Defense Authorization Act, and appropriations measures.

Energy Security



For the sake of transatlantic stability, the U.S. must continue helping safeguard the energy security of its European allies. Export of U.S. energy supplies to Europe in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) directly contributes to reaching this goal.

We are concerned with the safety of the Astravets nuclear power plant located in Lithuania's backyard. We strongly urge Congress to take any actions necessary to ensure the powerplant follows international safety protocols.

Sanctions



Around \$300 billion in Russian central bank assets are frozen, but not yet seized by the United States and European allies. When criminals commit crimes, they are subject to criminal and/or civil penalties. We support seizing Russian assets as a penalty for Russia's crimes.

Sanctions on the federal and state-level should be implemented at the fullest extent of the law to cripple Russia's economic ability to wage war and should target individuals involved in human rights abuses and corruption under Magnitsky laws. Congress should investigate corporate compliance with sanctions against Russia. As well, states should cut state contracts with Russian and Belarusian entities, as well as divest their public funds from Russian and Belarusian assets.

U.S.-Lithuania Relations



The relationship between the U.S. and Lithuania is in the best interests of both nations. Since restoring independence, Lithuania has been a staunch ally and trading partner of the U.S. For example: As a NATO member since 2004, Lithuania has sent troops to support various campaigns by the U.S. military including in Iraq & Afghanistan. Moreover, Lithuania contributed 2.54% of its GDP to defense spending – fifth highest among NATO allies – and has pledged to reach 3% soon.

Lithuanians will always remember that throughout the Cold War, the U.S. never recognized the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries and how it supported the cause of independence through various programs including Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Continued U.S. support is crucial for Lithuanian independence and as a bulwark against encroachment upon Europe from Russia.

The PA National Guard has enjoyed a partnership with Lithuania for 30 years.

The Lithuanian-American Community urges all members of Congress to join the Baltic Caucuses.

House Baltic Caucus Co-Chairs: Rep. Don Bacon and Rep. Ruben Gallego

Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus Co-Chairs: Sen. Dick Durbin and Sen. Chuck Grassley

Founded in 1951, LAC is a community organization on the forefront of fostering the growth of democratic institutions in the country of our heritage and preserving Lithuanian cultural identity in the U.S. The LAC's Public Affairs Committee chair, Krista Butvydas Bard, also serves as Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. LAC works in conjunction with Congress and other U.S. and Baltic organizations to further the goals of community and democracy building.