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July 10, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Minnesota State Legislature:

On behalf of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM), I write to express our full support for the proposed establishment of a State Council on Central and Eastern European Affairs.

With over 220,000 Minnesotans claiming Polish ancestry, the Polish-American community represents the largest Central and Eastern European heritage group in the state. Our presence in Minnesota spans generations, contributing richly to the cultural, economic, religious, and civic life of the state. From building neighborhoods and institutions to serving in leadership roles across professions, Polish Minnesotans have helped shape the identity and resilience of Minnesota.

Since its founding in 1980, PACIM has promoted Polish heritage through language programs, arts and cultural events, historical preservation, and educational exchanges with Poland. We offer Polish language classes, maintain a lending library of Polish books and media, and support students of Polish descent through the Polanie Legacy Scholarship, which funds post-secondary education at colleges, universities, and technical or vocational schools. We also administer the Chester Rog Endowment Fund, which provides grants to individuals or groups pursuing professional development in Polish language, arts, or culture—locally or abroad—with the expectation that they use their experience to promote Polish heritage. Additionally, PACIM supports charitable institutions in Poland that serve those in need—an effort that reflects the generosity and global-mindedness of Minnesotans and helps strengthen our state’s reputation as a compassionate and culturally connected community. Through these efforts, we serve as a bridge between generations and cultures—preserving tradition while fostering civic engagement and intercultural dialogue.

The creation of a Council on Central and Eastern European Affairs would be a timely and meaningful recognition of the shared legacy and current needs of our region’s ethnic communities. It would provide an institutional voice to advance dialogue, shape inclusive policies, and strengthen collaboration between the State and the communities it serves. It would also inspire younger

generations to stay rooted in their Polish cultural identity while contributing actively to Minnesota's public life.

We respectfully ask the Minnesota Legislature to support this important initiative and continue our state's proud tradition of honoring and empowering diverse communities.

Sincerely,



Mietek T Konczyk

President

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