October 29, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran Chairman Committee on Appropriations U.S. Senate Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers Chairman Committee on Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C., 20515 The Honorable Barbara Mikulski Ranking Member Committee on Appropriations U.S. Senate Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey Ranking Member Committee on Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey:

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine – its courageous efforts to reform while resisting Russian aggression and its attempts to secure a transformation to an independent, democratic, economically vibrant nation – demands immediate expansion of U.S. support. We, the undersigned, include representatives of more than 22 million Americans of Central and East European descent who firmly believe bolstering Ukraine's security and independence is vital to ensuring Central and Eastern Europe's security, prosperity, and freedom.

We urge immediate action on a comprehensive U.S. aid package to help the people of Ukraine address priority economic, security, and humanitarian relief needs. Based on our knowledge of the situation, we believe this package should include:

- \$3 billion in economic assistance: comprising loan guarantees, direct budget support grants, or debt swaps as well as assistance to support reforms in key sectors, such as banking, judiciary, and energy, and to encourage investment in Ukraine.
- \$1 billion in military equipment and training support, including defensive lethal assistance as required by the Ukraine Freedom Support Act.
- A minimum of \$200 million in additional immediate humanitarian aid to meet the funding gap identified by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as Ukraine grapples with 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over 5 million persons including 1.7 million children in need of immediate assistance.
- Increased resources to support independent media facilitating delivery of free media content to Russian-speakers, and empowering non-governmental actors with a proven track record to counter Russian propaganda.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a strategic threat to the United States and Europe, particularly the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to its hybrid war in Ukraine and continued occupation of territories in Georgia, the Kremlin has engaged in provocations against the Baltic states, such as kidnapping an Estonian intelligence officer from Estonia,

ongoing dangerous aerial and maritime incursions around the Baltic Sea—including interfering with the laying of electrical cable between Sweden and Lithuania in Lithuania's economic zone of the Baltic Sea—and continuous threats by Russia's military just short of aggression. Russia's plan for a military air base in Belarus is another stark example. Other neighbors, especially non-NATO countries, are very nervous about Putin's bellicose actions. By helping Ukraine defend itself and succeed as a democratic nation, we also assure protection of the region.

In the wake of Russia's invasion and occupation last year of Crimea and large portions of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, Ukraine's stability and its sovereign role in Europe are under siege. The difficulties faced by the government in addressing the needs of its people are likely to be compounded in the coming winter months, which could have grave consequences if not addressed immediately.

The expanded support outlined above will demonstrate America's enduring support for ensuring a free and independent Ukraine. It will also send an important message to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe that the United States will stand resolutely against intimidation and in defense of a rules-based international system among nations. As Ukraine President Poroshenko recently stated before an audience of students at Columbia University, "We need your assistance; we need your help."

Sincerely,

American Center for a European Ukraine American Hungarian Federation American Latvian Association Armenian Assembly of America Belarusan-American Association Estonian American National Council Georgian Association in the USA Hungarian American Coalition Joint Baltic American National Committee Lithuanian American Community, Inc. Lithuanian-American Council New International Leadership Institute **Polish American Congress** Slovak League of America **Ukrainian Congress Committee of America** U.S.-Ukraine Business Council **U.S.-Ukraine Foundation VOLYA Institute for Contemporary Law and Society**

CC: The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Chairman, State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Subcommittee

The Honorable Kay Granger, Chairwoman, State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Subcommittee