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US-Poland Business Council Announces Support For JOLT Act

**Bipartisan Bill from Reps. Chabot, Heck, Quigley Would Create US Jobs
and Strengthen Bilateral Relationship**

WASHINGTON, DC – [The US-Poland Business Council](#) announced its support for the Jobs Originating Through Launching (JOLT) Act, introduced by Congressmen Steve Chabot (R-OH), Joe Heck (R-NV) and Mike Quigley (D-IL) in the U.S. House of Representatives today. The bill would strengthen the relationship between the United States and Poland and create thousands of American jobs by reforming the badly out-of-date Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which allows citizens of selected countries to travel to the U.S. without a visa.

“Poland is the only member of the 25-country Schengen Treaty Area not included in the Visa Waiver Program,” explained Eric Stewart, President of the US-Poland Business Council. “Poland has been an important economic and foreign policy ally of the United States. It has supported the U.S.’s efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and has indicated it is willing to serve as an outpost for a military defense shield. Yet, even with a low visa overstay rate, it’s been kept out of the VWP. It’s time to correct this inequity.”

The JOLT Act would expand the Visa Waiver Program to allow countries with visa overstay rates of less than three percent to participate. This important change could result in Poland’s acceptance into the VWP. The bill also includes new standards that would result in faster visa processing and expedited entry for priority visitors.

In addition to strengthening the United States’s overall relationship with Poland, the legislation would also directly benefit the economy, most significantly the U.S. travel industry. According to a recent study by the U.S. Travel Association, admitting 11 additional countries to the VWP, including Poland, would create more than 100,000 jobs in the United States. It is estimated visitors from these 11 countries would spend \$14 billion tourist dollars each year in the U.S.

“Poland is one of the fastest growing economies in Europe,” said Stewart. “Currently, the citizens of neighboring countries can travel with ease to the United States. Polish citizens are eager to visit, and spend money here. Poland’s continued exclusion from the VWP also threatens American companies’ long-held competitive advantage in Poland and creates barriers to taking full advantage of new economic opportunities. Opening the doors to Polish visitors will help the entire U.S. economy.”

Today's announcement comes in advance of the US-Poland Business Council's planned summit between the two countries, set for June 20 in Warsaw. U.S. Commerce Secretary John Bryson and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk are both scheduled to participate.

[The US-Poland Business Council](#) is a Washington, DC based non-profit organization that promotes commercial relations between the United States and Poland. The mission of the Council is to enhance US-Poland trade and investment, advance the US-Poland bilateral relationship, and educate the public about its importance. To achieve its mission, the Council will sponsor policy conferences, briefing sessions and major events featuring senior U.S. and Polish officials, academic and business leaders.

The Council was founded in the summer of 2010 by 17 US multinational companies, and has grown to include 27 member companies today: The AES Corporation, AMGEN, Archer Daniels Midland Company, BNK Petroleum, The Boeing Company, Chevron, Chartis, ConocoPhillips, Eli Lilly, ExxonMobil, Fluor Corporation, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, Invenergy LLC, International Paper, Marathon Oil, MetLife, Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, PLC, Owens-Illinois, Inc., PHRMA, Raytheon Company, The Shaw Group Inc., Smithfield Foods, Inc., The Timken Company, UPS, Westinghouse Electric Co.

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