



SR0262

LRB097 12226 GRL 56683 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Since 2005, the U.S. Department of State has been conducting discussions with Poland so that the nation may be admitted to the United States' visa waiver program, which allows citizens of specific countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business purposes for up to 90 days with a passport, without having to obtain a visa; and

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WHEREAS, President George W. Bush supported working with Congress and international partners to modify the visa waiver program; in 2006, the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Bill was introduced, but the United States Senate took no action; the bill directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a pilot program to expand the visa waiver program for countries that are cooperating with the United States on security and counterterrorism matters; and

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WHEREAS, Citizens of 30 European countries, including Poland's neighbors Germany, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Slovakia, are eligible for visa-free entry into the United States under the visa waiver program; and

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WHEREAS, Poland has a very high ranking in human development, human rights, and standard of living, which are all criteria shared by countries eligible for the visa entry

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1 program; due to their country's strong economy, citizens of
2 Poland who have visas do not overstay them; and

3 WHEREAS, Admitting Poland into the visa entry program would
4 bring more Polish tourists to Chicago; additionally, both
5 Chicago and the Polish city of Warsaw are major financial
6 centers; easing restrictions for travel between the two cities
7 would benefit both economies; and

8 WHEREAS, Polish President Komorowski has recently reached
9 out to President Obama to encourage him to resurrect
10 negotiations easing restrictions for Polish citizens to travel
11 to the United States; President Obama has pledged to work on
12 the issue; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
14 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the President
15 of the United States to lift the restrictions currently in
16 place that prevent Poland from being admitted to the visa
17 waiver program; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 delivered to President Barack Obama.