

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Csaba Krasznai. I am the pastor of The First Hungarian Reformed Church of Cleveland, Ohio. This church was the first Hungarian Protestant Reformed congregation that was officially established in the United States on May 3, 1891. I am also the Bishop of the Calvin Synod Conference of the United Church of Christ. Our Magyar (Hungarian) Synod was officially established on March 14, 1939.

I came to America on May 9, 2003 with my wife and my daughter who was born in Toronto, Canada. Our two other children were born in Cleveland. This is my 17<sup>th</sup> year serving at the First Hungarian Reformed Church. God always knows what the best is for His children as He brought me and my family to this land.

Our Hungarian forefathers experienced this same blessing in this country who had come to this continent to seek their fortunes in the late 1800's and early 1900's. However, there was another motivating force. The difficulties and great trials in the mother land also drove them to find a place where they might enjoy a better life and future in this land. Many came to America and found their new home which also became their spiritual home. They received support through their families and friends, living in the United States, and also from the Christian Hungarian churches. The American Government made all the effort to supply help and support for the immigrant Hungarians to settle down in their new homeland after World War I and World War II and during and after the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight. Many of them received their naturalization during those times. Therefore, the largest population of third- and fourth-generation Hungarians in Ohio, live in Cleveland and its area. I assume that there are those among us here who have Hungarian ancestry, and the family names like, Kovach, Nemeth, Toth, Olah, Horvath, and Szabo sound familiar.

However, the Hungarian young people, who come to America today, unfortunately do not have such intensive and effective support that our forefathers and ancestors enjoyed. The Office of Eastern European Commission in Ohio could certainly undertake and supply the task to guide and support those who come to the United States to make their new life here in order to enrich the American economy and social life.

For Hungarians and other Eastern European emigrants it is difficult to find help and support. They could only find housing, new job, school, etc. if they get in contact with Hungarians living in that same city or town. Therefore, it is important for them to know where and who they could turn to for guidance and help. They need a support system that the Eastern European Commission in Ohio could provide for them.

We Hungarians, as other Eastern European communities in Ohio, lay much emphasis on our culture. The Eastern European Commission in Ohio could work it out to promote our Hungarian heritage through an established and well-working network that would connect those who emigrated from Hungary or were born here but keep their Hungarian heritage and culture.

Additionally, the Eastern European Commission in Ohio could effectively work with the United Hungarian Societies that was formed in 1902. This organization coordinates the cultural, charitable, and welfare activities of the member societies and the local Hungarian community. The most notable events are to commemorate each year the March 15, 1848 Revolution and Freedom Fight and the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight. This umbrella organization continues to unite the Greater Cleveland area

Hungarian-American organizations, and looks to preserve, cultivate, develop, and disseminate Hungarian culture. The Hungarian scouts and churches also belong to and have membership with the United Hungarian Societies.

In the past couple of years, the need for learning Hungarian also emerged among those whose grandparents were Hungarians, but they did not pass on the language to the next generation. There are several language schools in Cleveland, but also in the state of Ohio. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year that there are Hungarian classes offered in beginner and intermediate level by Fulbright scholarship interns at the Cleveland State University. The Eastern European Commission in Ohio could take part in these educational programs and find new ways to make it more fruitful.

We are very proud of our children who speak the Hungarian language. These children can help in public and private schools to translate for those students who arrive from Hungary or from other Eastern European countries and do not speak English yet. There are many Hungarians who speak Romanian and Slovakian, and other European languages, as well.

Another important organization in Cleveland is the Hungarian American Chamber of Commerce of Ohio, Inc. that was established in January 2019, and it serves the Hungarian and American business communities in Ohio. This organization strives to lend support and create opportunities for their constituency. There are monthly meetings where Hungarian and American business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals in Ohio gather and learn more about leadership skills and doing business more effectively. The purpose is to find and connect more of those living and having their business in Cleveland and the Cleveland area. Eastern European Commission in Ohio could help to expand this effort to connect Hungarians living and owning businesses not only in Cleveland but in Columbus, Dayton, Youngstown, Toledo, etc. The main goal is to help and support one another.

I urge the legislators to support the establishment of the Office of Eastern European Affairs and fund the Commission in order to begin the work for our Eastern European people. Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Rt. Rev. Dr. Csaba Krasznai  
Pastor  
The First Hungarian Reformed Church  
of Cleveland, Ohio  
Bishop  
Calvin Synod Conference  
of the United Church of Christ