

**Advocating for Ukraine: Examining the Role of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Washington, 1980 – Present**  
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The Ukrainian-American diaspora has a long history of political advocacy and activism in Washington, especially with the U.S. Congress. These advocacy efforts have changed over time. During much of the Cold War, they largely concentrated on promoting Ukraine's independence. Following the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, they also focused on human rights issues, notably the defense of Ukrainian political prisoners, the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and recognition of the Holodomor. I will highlight the most active period – the late 1980's and early 1990's - and then the changing role of diaspora activism in the post-independence period when Ukraine became a much greater U.S. policy priority. This includes encouraging political and diplomatic support for Ukraine as well as concrete assistance. I will discuss various forms of advocacy employed by the diaspora– direct and indirect, professional and voluntary, formal and informal. I will provide my thoughts and observations on the role, influence and efficacy of diaspora activity in Washington from the perspective of having been a policy advisor at the U.S. Helsinki Commission (1981-2017), as well as from my involvement in various diaspora organizations.