

Extension of Remarks
Rep. Jan Schakowsky
Polish Constitution Day
May 3, 2011

Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to recognize Polish Constitution Day and to commemorate the signing of Europe's first codified constitution on May 3rd, 1791.

Three years after the adoption of our own constitution, Poland became the second nation in the world to codify a constitution. Under the leadership of King Stanislaw August, Poland approved a constitution that contained many of the groundbreaking democratic principles also embraced by America's founding fathers. Among those was the separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The constitution also placed peasants under the protection of the government and established the concept of political equality.

Since the adoption of the 1791 Constitution, Poland has withstood countless hardships to emerge as a strong U.S. friend and ally. Here in the United States, Polish-Americans have made critical contributions to the development of our nation. This weekend, the city of Chicago's vibrant Polish community, the largest outside of Warsaw, will hold its 120th annual parade in honor of this historic document.

I join with people in the United States, Poland, and around the world in commemorating the anniversary of this historic document, celebrating Polish history, and recognizing the important contributions that the Polish people have made to the development of democracy.