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**POLISH and UKRIANIAN LEADERS EXAMINE EDUCATION-
MENTAL HEATH / COUNSELING IN
NORFOLK, VA**

NORFOLK, VA — The Congressional Office for International Leadership (formerly known as the Open World Leadership Center), an agency of the U.S. Congress, will send a delegation of Polish and Ukrainian psychologists to Norfolk, VA from August 12-20, 2022. The delegation consists of five professionals and will be accompanied by a bicultural/lingual facilitator and an interpreter. While in Norfolk, the Open World program participants will be hosted by Norfolk Sister City Association.

Prior to their arrival in Norfolk the participants completed an orientation in Washington, D.C. Delegates had policy meetings with Members of Congress.

In Norfolk, delegates will collaborate on best practices for the treatment of trauma, anxiety and PTSD in the Ukrainian refugee population of women and children. The program topic is *Education – Mental Health / Counseling*. Delegates will have informal meetings with the local staff of U.S. Senator Tim Kaine and U.S. Senator Mark Warner. Delegates will also meet with Congressman Bobby Scott, VA 3rd District. On August 15 the delegation will be formally received by City of Norfolk Mayor Kenneth C. Alexander. That day will include presentations from and conversations with staff and leadership from the City Manager's Office; Norfolk Community Services Board and the Department of Health & Human Services. Additional activities include meetings with the related departments at Norfolk Public Schools, Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University, CHKD, EVMS, Veterans Administration in Hampton and YWCA. The delegation will stay in the homes of local residents who serve as hospitality hosts.

More than 30,000 current and future leaders from post-Soviet era countries have participated in the Open World program. Open World offers one of the most effective U.S. exchange programs to promote mutually beneficial options for depolarized engagement between future national leaders. It is a unique but no less powerful tool for Congress to engage legislatures in critical regions of the world.

The Norfolk Sister City Association, founded in 1976, is a non-profit, civic organization which coordinates the activities between Norfolk, Virginia, and her international sister cities. Norfolk currently has nine sister cities around the world: Kitakyushu, Japan; Wilhelmshaven, Germany; Norfolk County, England; Toulon, France; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Cagayan de Oro, Philippines; Tema, Ghana; Kochi, India; and Ningbo, China. The Association's purpose is to promote international understanding, friendship and cooperation through people-to-people exchanges and long-term partnerships between Norfolk and her sister cities abroad. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, the Association is a membership organization which aims to involve a broad spectrum of the local community in citizen diplomacy. As a member of Sister Cities International, our motto is "peace through people." The Association has hosted six previous Open World Rule of Law delegations of Russian judges in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, and 2012; two delegations of Ukrainian judges in 2007 and 2008, and one delegation of Georgian judges in 2010 and a delegation of legal professionals from Armenia in 2017. We have also hosted three OWP special themed delegations from Kaliningrad, Russia: Social Issues in 2007, Accountable Governance in 2011 and Higher Education in 2013. Topics that served general Russian delegations included Press Freedoms in 2016 and Political parties in 2018. We have had one OWP-Rumsfeld Fellows delegation in 2019. Our first post COVID delegation came from Uzbekistan in April 2022.

COIL, a Support Agency of the Congress

Founded in 1999 by Congress, the Congressional Office for International Leadership (formerly known as the Open World Leadership Center) maintains a vast network of more than 30,000 alumni in strategic countries including Russia, Ukraine, and others in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It's Open World program supports legislative diplomacy efforts for Members of Congress by conducting exchanges that establish authentic communication and enduring relations that are maintained through its extensive alumni network. Program participants are provided with exposure to the work of Congress, American politics, accountable governance, and volunteerism while being home hosted by American families. To learn more about the Open World program, please visit www.openworld.gov/

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