

Nation's Governors Meet With Ukrainian President, Back Ukraine

Apr. 4, 2023 | [Commentary](#)



Throughout the past year, Governors have acted quickly to condemn Russia's invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine while also taking initiative to implement policies to support the Ukrainian people, who continue to inspire the world with their courage and determination.

The nation's Governors met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy **via video conference on April 4** to receive an update on Ukraine's humanitarian and security situation and to express bipartisan support for the Ukrainian people in their fight against the Russian invasion.

The meeting reflects Governors' ongoing work to back the Ukrainian people. Throughout the past year, Governors have acted quickly to condemn Russia's invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine while also taking initiative to implement policies to support the Ukrainian people, who continue to inspire the world with their courage and determination.

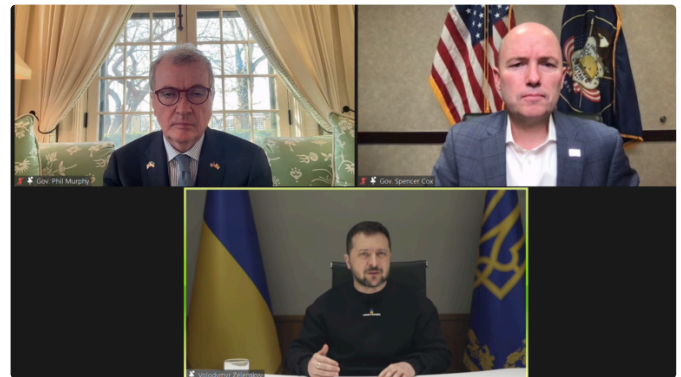
As practical problem solvers, Governors first began issuing statements and speaking at rallies and attending vigils and church services immediately following the invasion that began February 24, 2022. Governors have reached out to support the Ukrainian diaspora and Eastern European communities in their states and territories, and Governors' leadership and work to support Ukraine continues today.

During the past year, Governors have led their states in days of solidarity and prayer for Ukraine. Across the United States, bridges, towers, state capitols and Governors' residences have been lit in the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, Governors began banning the sale of Russian products. They severed ties with sister cities and reviewed state investments and contracts to eliminate any financial support for the Russian regime. They have partnered with charitable organizations to send humanitarian aid. Many Governors have been working in their states to help welcome Ukrainian refugees. States' public safety and law enforcement departments and agencies have donated surplus equipment, such as personal protective gear, to Ukraine.

The National Guard has also played a strategic role bolstering the U.S.'s Ukraine counterparts.

National Guard service members have been deploying in support of Ukraine. Guard members are also training the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and the National Guard has sent critical supplies and equipment in addition to providing strategic counsel.



New Jersey

In March 2022, NGA Chair New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy **signed Executive Order No. 291**, requiring all state agencies to review their authority to suspend or revoke licenses, permits, registrations and certifications of businesses that invest directly in companies owned or controlled by the government of Russia, Belarus or its instrumentalities. The executive order also directs all relevant state agencies to undertake a review of the New Jersey's ability to boycott or halt the import or purchase of products or services provided from Russia or Belarus. In February, Governor Murphy **visited Ukraine**, where he met with refugees and displaced children.

"Here in New Jersey, we are turning our outrage at Putin into support and action for the Ukrainian people."

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, NGA Chair

Utah

In an August 2022 **editorial published in Fortune magazine**, NGA Vice Chair Utah Governor Spencer Cox focused on ways states can streamline the resettlement process to support Ukrainian refugees. Governor Cox proposed states could create a Refugee Service Office similar to the one Utah launched in addition to developing public-private partnerships and enlisting volunteers. In March 2022, Governor Cox **wrote President Biden** to encourage “eliminating any barriers to increasing U.S. domestic oil and gas production” as a step to support Ukraine. In February 2022, Governor Cox **issued an executive order** requiring the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to remove all Russian-produced and Russian-branded products from its shelves immediately.

“As Utahns and as Americans, we stand united against oppression. We stand united for democracy. We stand united for freedom for Ukraine.”

Utah Governor Spencer Cox, NGA Vice Chair

Washington

Since Russia’s illegal seizure of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, Washington has become home to more Ukrainian refugees than any other state, **according to The Seattle Times**. In the last year alone, Washington has taken in **16,000 Ukrainian refugees**. In March 2022, Washington Governor Jay Inslee helped organize a flight to take 32 tons of medical supplies to Ukraine. Governor Inslee also issued a **directive** to state agencies to ban new contracts and investments with Russian agencies or state-owned businesses.

“As the world responds to this crisis with humanitarian and military aid, Washington State must also do its part in this common effort.”

Washington Governor Jay Inslee

Ohio

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed **Executive Order 22-02D** in March 2022 to prohibit the state from engaging in purchasing activity that would aid Russia in violating the rights of the Ukrainian people and ordering all state agencies, boards, commissions, state educational institutions and pension funds to divest investments in and terminate contracts with Russian institutions or companies. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services hosted a summit last year bringing together multiple organizations who could play a role in the relocation of Ukrainian families. The summit helped resettlement agencies, faith-based organizations, charities and others interested in supporting Ukrainians better understand their possible role in refugee resettlement and assess what Ukrainians’ needs may be. **As of February 2023**, more than 4,000 Ukrainians have been relocated to Ohio.

“Ohio is home to about 42,000 people of Ukrainian descent, and we welcome any Ukrainians who seek refuge in the Buckeye State.”

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine

Illinois

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker **signed HB1293 into law**, divesting Illinois state pension funds from Russian and Belarusian banks and companies. Illinois communities have welcomed refugees from Ukraine, and members of the Illinois National Guard have taken part in **training exercises** with the Ukrainian military.

“My own family hails from Kyiv, Ukraine. But whether you come from Ukraine, your family has descendants from Ukraine, or your family is from anywhere else in the world, today we are ALL Ukrainian.”

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker

Virginia

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin **ordered** the Virginia Department of General Services to review all contracts across government and procurement to determine what, if any, Virginia tax dollars are spent on goods and services from primarily Russian companies. The Governor also called on cities

of Norfolk and Roanoke to end sister city partnerships in addition to calling on the Virginia Retirement System Board of Trustees and university endowment funds to divest in any and all holdings of the Russian Ruble and any and all securities of Russian companies.

“The people of the Commonwealth are ready to rally in opposition to this senseless attack on a sovereign nation and western ideals.”

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin

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