

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Christy Dowling and I am the President of the Kansas Czechs, Inc. I am writing this letter in support of the motion to make the polka the official dance of the state of Kansas. The Kansas Czechs, Inc. is partially responsible for the activities surrounding the annual After Harvest Czech Festival in Wilson, Kansas. Every year, we work to obtain entertainment to showcase the Czech heritage. The top of our list always includes polka bands. This draws the largest crowds and is a favorite among all those attend, whether they have Czech background or not. Historically, the polka was started in Czechoslovakia and has spread throughout the world into areas including Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Russia. A large amount of the population of Kansas emigrated from these countries around the turn of the century, bringing with them the customs of their homelands. Among these, were polka music and dancing. Although I am of Czech descent, I also grew up in the Volga German community of Hays. I have seen how the polka plays an important part in the Russian-German ethnicities that developed Ellis County, as well as many other cultures and communities in Kansas. People of all ages and every culture love to listen and dance to the polka all over the state, and I believe it to be an accurate representation of the most popular dance in Kansas. It is an important part of the history of this state and its citizens. I, along with the Kansas Czechs, Inc., whole-heartedly lend my support to the designation of the polka as the state dance of Kansas.

Sincerely,

Christy Dowling

President, Kansas Czechs,Inc.