



REVIVE THE U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY AT DESTINATION CAPITOL HILL

Domestic business travel spending remained **56% below 2019 levels** in 2021 and international travel spending remained **78% below 2019 levels**. **When travel thrives, so does America's economy**. It is imperative that Congress does all it can to **revive these critical sectors of the travel economy**.

Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. travel industry experienced 10 straight years of growth due to the strength of the domestic leisure travel, domestic business travel and international inbound travel segments. **Travel was a significant economic driver in every region of the country, representing 1 in 10 jobs** and generating a travel trade surplus.

The U.S. travel industry suffered unparalleled losses amid the COVID-19 pandemic. While domestic leisure is thriving, **the recovery remains uneven across other travel sectors**. Domestic business travel and international inbound travel spending remain severely depressed, dragging the overall industry's recovery.

We not only need to get back to pre-pandemic levels but also **make up for years of losses**. While we are years away from returning to 2019 levels, the right stimulative policies can **return us to the trajectory of growth**.

REBUILD THE WORKFORCE

While other sectors of the economy have recovered from the pandemic, the travel workforce remains disproportionately depleted. Overall U.S. employment is just 1.4% below 2019 levels, but Leisure & Hospitality (L&H) employment is down a staggering 9%. **Nearly three-quarters (73%) of all jobs still lost due to the pandemic are in the L&H sector**. This labor shortage is threatening travel's recovery and will only prolong the economic pain of the pandemic—particularly ahead of the busy summer travel season.

ASKS

- **Encourage the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to release all authorized H-2B visas in time for the beginning of the summer season.** The recent appropriations law provides DHS with the authority in FY22, but not the requirement, to provide additional H-2B visas above the statutory cap.
- **IN HOUSE MEETING: Cosponsor the H-2B Returning Worker Exemption Act (H.R. 3897)**, which would permanently increase H-2B visas by exempting returning workers from the cap.
- **IN SENATE MEETING: Support the introduction of legislation in the Senate** to permanently increase H-2B visas by exempting returning workers from the cap.
- **Support long-term structural reforms to temporary worker programs** that would provide the travel industry with dedicated, increased and predictable access to temporary seasonal work visas.

REIGNITE IN-PERSON BUSINESS MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Business travel was still 56% below pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and remains severely depressed. This is having a disproportionate impact on the overall travel industry's recovery. Despite making up 20% of total trip volume, business travelers account for 40-60% of lodging and air revenue (pre-pandemic). It is time for corporate leaders and the federal government to **get back to business** to reignite these valuable face-to-face connections and **restore this critical segment of the U.S. economy.**

ASKS

Help revive business travel spending in restaurants and entertainment venues by ensuring any year-end tax package:

- **Restores the deductibility of entertainment business expenses** to spur recovery in the live entertainment and events sector.
- **Extends full expensing for business meals beyond 2022** to support recovery in the restaurant sector, similar to Senator Tim Scott's (R-SC) Supporting America's Restaurant Workers Act.

RESTORE INTERNATIONAL INBOUND TRAVEL

International travel spending was still down 78% from pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and remains severely depressed, hurting communities around the country. International visitors stay longer and spend more money than their domestic counterparts; without these valuable visitors, travel businesses will continue to lag in their recovery.

With pandemic-era restrictions such as the pre-departure testing requirement and federal mask mandate for transportation still in effect, international inbound travel cannot fully recover. Visitor visa processing issues at consulates around the world are also presenting a significant hurdle in restoring inbound travel.

ASKS

Encourage the administration to:

- **Remove the pre-departure testing requirement for inbound travel to the U.S.**
 - **NEW - IN HOUSE MEETING:** Representative Lou Correa (D-CA) is leading a bipartisan House letter to the President, asking him to lift the predeparture testing requirement for vaccinated travelers. Other cosigners include Representatives María Salazar (R-FL), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Ken Buck (R-CO), and Jim Costa (D-CA). **Please sign the bipartisan letter to the President asking him to lift the pre-departure testing requirement for vaccinated travelers.**

The deadline for the letter is close of business Friday, April 8. To join the bipartisan letter, please contact Rep. Correa's office.

- **Allow the federal mask mandate for public transportation to expire on April 18.**

Modernize the security and efficiency of non-immigrant visa processing by giving the State Department flexibility to implement video-conferencing, group processing, and other reforms.

REIMAGINE THE **ROLE OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM** IN IMPROVING GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS



The pandemic decimated the travel industry, resulting in a **two-year loss of \$755 billion in travel spending** from which the industry is not expected to fully recover until 2024. **Proactive government planning will be necessary to shortening that timeline, restoring jobs more quickly and reclaiming significant losses in export income.** The Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 (S. 3375) establishes permanent, high-level leadership in the federal government on travel issues, enhances travel facilitation and security, improves global competitiveness and ensures our nation has long-term strategies for travel's economic recovery.

ASKS

- **IN SENATE MEETING: Cosponsor the Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 (S. 3375)**, which establishes an Assistant Secretary of Travel and Tourism at the Department of Commerce, focused on working across government to consistently develop strategies that increase travel to the U.S.
- **IN HOUSE MEETING: Support House companion legislation to the Senate's Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 (S. 3375)** to create an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism at the Department of Commerce. This role would be dedicated to our industry, elevating travel and tourism within economic policy discussions and helping to attract international meetings, conferences, and exhibitions to the U.S.—creating opportunities to drive critical export income into the U.S. while enhancing U.S.' global competitiveness.