



U.S. Travel's
DESTINATION
CAPITOL HILL

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TALKING POINTS & KEY ASKS

WHO WE ARE

- We represent America's travel industry. From airports and airlines, to hotels, attractions and destinations, we're united by a shared commitment to connecting people everywhere and showcasing the country we love.
- Whether it's for business, conventions, vacations or visiting the U.S. from abroad, travel fuels opportunity, strengthens communities and drives America's economy. Travel is more than just getting from point A to point B—it's a large sector of the economy, powered by real people from airports, hotels, transportation and attractions who welcome travelers and help them experience America.
- In 2025, travelers in the United States directly spent \$1.4 trillion, which produced an economic footprint of \$3 trillion and supported more than 15 million American jobs.
- In **[State]**, travelers spent **[\$XX]**, which supported **[XX]** jobs in our state and **[\$XX]** in taxes.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE CHALLENGE

- America and the travel industry have a historic opportunity ahead.
- Over the next three years, America will host America250, the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- With the right policies in place, these events can welcome 40 million international visitors and drive nearly \$100 billion in economic activity.
- But last year, the United States was the only major destination that saw a decrease in international visitors.
- When travel breaks down, America slows down. Government shutdowns, slow and bureaucratic visa processing, aging travel infrastructure, and outdated government technology lead to delays and safety gaps that frustrate travelers, create barriers to connection, and weaken America's ability to compete globally.
- We can't fix these problems alone. Congress is an essential partner in creating the seamless, reliable travel system we need to capitalize on the historic opportunities ahead, keep people moving, businesses thriving and America moving forward.

PROTECT DOMESTIC AIR TRAVEL FROM FUTURE SHUTDOWNS

- Congress should not treat frontline aviation workers as political pawns during future funding fights. When air traffic controllers and TSA officers are forced to work without pay, it strains an already under-resourced aviation system and sends ripple effects across the entire travel ecosystem.
- The 2025 shutdown cost the economy more than \$6 billion—nearly \$140 million per day—and negatively impacted more than 6 million passengers.

OUR ASK

- Cosponsor and pass legislation such as the Aviation Funding Solvency Act (H.R. 6086), Keep America Flying Act (S. 3031 / H.R. 5851) and Aviation Funding Stability Act of 2025 (S. 1045) to ensure air traffic controllers and TSA officers are paid during funding lapses to prevent disruptions to the economy and the air travel system.

PREVENT HARM TO INTERNATIONAL INBOUND TRAVEL

PROTECT THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

- In December 2025, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposed changes to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) that would mandate disclosures of social media information and require extensive personal data, which will deter lawful visitation.
- According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC), if these changes are fully implemented, it could result in a 23% reduction in travel from Visa Waiver Program countries and could cost the United States an estimated \$15.7 billion in spending and over 150,000 lost jobs.

STOP THE VISA INTEGRITY FEE

- In the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB), Congress directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to charge a new Visa Integrity Fee of at least \$250 on all nonimmigrant visa categories, other than ESTA.
- The fee would make the upfront costs of a U.S. visitor visa among the highest in the world. In repeated surveys of international travelers, cost is consistently a top deterrent to visiting the U.S., and the Travel Deterrence Fee will only make matters worse.
- According to Tourism Economics, even at the statutory minimum of \$250, the Visa Integrity Fee would result in 3 million fewer visitors and cost the U.S. \$9 billion in visitor spending during the remainder of President Trump's term.

OUR ASK

- Urge the Administration to halt U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) proposed changes to the ESTA application.
- Develop legislation to delay or limit the proposed Visa Integrity Fee.
- Support appropriations report language that would delay implementation of the proposed ESTA changes and the Visa Integrity Fee by requiring the Department of Homeland Security to report back to Congress on the justification for these changes and the potential negative impacts they could have on international visitation.

PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL VISITATION TO ALL REGIONS OF THE U.S.

- Brand USA is a public-private partnership, created by the bipartisan Travel Promotion Act, that promotes international travel to all regions of the United States and communicates official visa and entry policies to help international visitors comply with U.S. immigration laws.
- These international visitors fuel key sectors of the U.S. economy—buying American-made goods and services every day from hotels, restaurants, retail, attractions, and the many services that support the travel and tourism sector. International visitors spend eight times as much as domestic tourists. This spending is an American export.
- As a result, Brand USA drives more than \$24 in visitor spending for every dollar invested.
- Brand USA is actively working to maximize the number of international visitors that attend America250, the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the 2028 Summer Olympics — and drive visitation beyond host cities so all communities benefit from these events.
- Brand USA doesn't cost taxpayers a dime. It is funded solely by travel industry contributions and fees paid by international visitors who use the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).
- Despite the President's FY26 budget request to fully fund Brand USA at \$100 million per year, the One Big Beautiful Bill reduced the federal funding match for Brand USA to just \$20 million.
- Other major countries that we compete with for international visitors have government-funded tourism promotion boards that are investing more than we are in destination promotion.

OUR ASK

- Cosponsor S. 3220 / H.R. 6128, the VISIT USA Act, which would transfer \$160 million in surplus Travel Promotion Funds to Brand USA to increase visitation to the U.S. for major upcoming events and restore our lost share of international visitors. These surplus funds originate from ESTA fees paid by international visitors, ensuring the bill simply uses funding that was originally established, collected and intended to support Brand USA.
 - **Bill sponsors in Senate:** Sen. Sullivan (R-AK) and Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN)
 - **Bill sponsors in House:** Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL) and Rep. Castor (R-FL)