

TRAVEL: AMERICA'S UNSUNG HERO OF JOB CREATION

Pro-Travel Policies: Critical to Continued Growth

Travel is essential to the American economy and provides an indispensable source for job creation. The travel industry is the seventh-largest employer in the U.S., supporting a total of 15.6 million domestic jobs and directly employing 8.8 million Americans. The travel industry is unique: it is highly-dependent on human labor, generally immune to outsourcing abroad and plays a key role in international trade. Given travel's critical role in creating and maintaining jobs across the country, lawmakers at all levels should prioritize policies that are pro-connectivity, pro-growth and pro-traveler.

SECURELY WELCOME LEGITIMATE INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

Welcoming international visitors to the U.S. benefits our economy, our nation's trade balance and millions of American jobs.

➤ Continue Funding Brand USA

Brand USA has been an unqualified success, helping to restore America's brand and share in the world travel marketplace. As a public-private partnership, the agency does not use federal taxpayer money. Brand USA is funded by a combination of Department of Homeland Security's Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) fees collected under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and matching contributions from 700 partner organizations.

Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped attract 4.3 million additional international visitors to the United States over four years, benefitting the U.S. economy with nearly \$30 billion in total economic impact and supported, on average, 50,900 additional jobs annually.

Congress and the Administration should remain committed to Brand USA's success by supporting its continued funding and upcoming reauthorization.

➤ Preserve and Continue to Expand the Visa Waiver Program

The VWP safeguards national security while facilitating inbound travel, helping to create thousands of good American jobs. VWP travelers undergo several prescreening methods are checked against multiple law enforcement and security databases and are required to use biometric passports that conform to stringent international security standards.

In 2016, 23 million (60 percent) overseas visitors arrived under the VWP, generating \$190 billion in total economic input, which supported nearly one million jobs.

Congress and the Administration should continue to preserve and expand the Visa Waiver Program.

➤ Ensure a Secure and Welcoming Visa Process

Our visa process plays a critical role in advancing economic opportunity while ensuring our national security and protecting the traveling public.

In 2016, 75.6 million international inbound travelers spent \$154 billion on American goods and services, directly supporting 1.2 million U.S. jobs.

Congress and the Administration should clearly convey the message that the U.S. remains a welcoming and hospitable nation to international travelers, while responding to evolving security threats with new and thoughtful protocols in the visa application process.

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IMPROVE AMERICA'S CONNECTIVITY

Greater investment in the condition and performance of America's infrastructure—including airports, highways, transit and passenger rail—will support economic growth, job creation and the travel industry's global competitiveness by improving connectivity and the passenger experience for domestic and international travelers alike.

➤ Improve Surface Transportation

In 2015, Congress passed the country's first long-term transportation package in a decade, with provisions to foster cooperation between local and state-level transportation planners and travel leaders, as well as the creation of a national commission on travel infrastructure.

More than 99 percent of all long-haul trips depend on our nation's systems of highways, airports and passenger rail. If travelers avoided just one car trip per year, the U.S. economy would lose \$23 billion in spending and 208,000 jobs.

The Administration and Congress should work closely with the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure as they create their infrastructure packages.

➤ Modernize Air Travel

In its current condition, America's air travel system will not be able to keep up with the growing air travel demand.

Air travel is forecasted to grow from 838 million passenger enplanements in 2017 to 1.23 billion by 2037, which could add hundreds of billions of dollars in annual travel spending and support hundreds of thousands new American jobs.

As one of the Administration's stated top priorities, Congress should take advantage of several legislative opportunities to improve the U.S. aviation system, such as adjusting the Passenger Facility Charge cap, which would give local control to airports to invest in infrastructure projects.

➤ Preserve Open Skies

America would not enjoy its current share of the highly lucrative international travel market without Open Skies agreements.

Since 2009, increased international travel to the U.S. has delivered \$50 billion to our economy, partly due to the success of Open Skies agreements. The Gulf carriers in particular brought 1.7 million international visitors to U.S. markets in 2016, contributing \$7.8 billion in traveler spending and supporting a total of 114,000 American jobs.

Congress should urge the Administration to uphold these agreements to ensure the continued ability of the U.S. to connect international visitors with underserved markets.

1. All information from: U.S. Travel Association, "Jobs Report 2017. Travel: America's Unsung Hero of Job Creation." Washington, D.C. 2017.