

America First: Remember Travel

Travel supports jobs in every state and congressional district. As America's number one services export, the travel industry has added jobs faster than other sectors since the economic recovery began. The increase in jobs and revenue from the travel industry helps the U.S. compete globally. When our lawmakers support pro-travel legislation, they are putting America first.

- The travel industry generates \$2.1 trillion for the U.S. economy, and travel tax revenue generates \$148 billion for local, state and federal governments.
- Travel supports more than 15.1 million jobs, both directly and indirectly. One in every nine American jobs depend on travel.
- U.S. travel jobs cannot be outsourced.
- Jobs in the tourism industry provide a good path to the middle class for millions of Americans.
- The U.S. travel and tourism industry generated nearly \$98 billion in trade surplus for the U.S. economy in 2015.
- When budgetary issues arise, Congress must remember that their decisions are multiplied at the local level, and felt by many of their constituents, whose jobs are directly supported by a functioning air travel infrastructure, National Parks and more.
- **Congress should support pro-travel legislation because the travel industry is an economic engine that creates good American jobs in every corner of the country.**

Air Travel Modernization: Keeping America Globally Connected and Competitive

In the next decade, air travel is forecasted to grow from 776 million enplanements per year to almost 926 million, which could add \$243 billion in annual travel spending and support 750,000 new American jobs. To seize this opportunity, we must address problems threatening future growth, such as aging airport infrastructure, declining airline competition and an outdated air traffic control system.

- Congress should give airport authorities the option to adjust user fees (called "passenger facility charges" or "PFCs"). These funds can only be used to pay for projects that increase airport capacity, enhance airline competition, reduce congestion, strengthen safety/security or reduce airport noise. This forward looking measure:
 - Increasing the PFC enhances airports by:
 - Modernizing airport infrastructure.
 - Enhancing airline competition and expands air service.
 - Reducing air traffic congestion.
 - Improving the passenger experience.
- **Members of Congress are encouraged to improve U.S. airports by removing the arbitrary federal limitation on airport user fees, called the passenger facility charge or PFC.**
 - Representatives should cosponsor H.R. 1265, the "Investing in America: Rebuilding America's Airport Infrastructure Act" and support its inclusion in the FAA reauthorization bill.

Preserving Open Skies

Open Skies agreements have been critical to America's efforts to capture a share of the highly lucrative international travel market. Since 2009, increased international travel to the U.S. has delivered \$50 billion to our economy. Three U.S. legacy carriers have alleged that competition from certain areas of the world, particularly the Gulf carriers are harming American jobs and economy—but the fact is: Airline competition has actually grown our economy.

- Economists have noted that fares have fallen 32 percent on routes under Open Skies agreements compared to markets that remained regulated. Subsequently, Open Skies agreements have generated at least \$4 billion in traveler benefits.
- The Gulf carriers brought 1.1 million international visitors to U.S. markets in 2014. These visitors contributed more than \$4.1 billion to U.S. GDP, supported nearly 50,000 American jobs paying more than \$2.6 billion and generated \$1.1 billion in federal, state and local taxes.
- Nearly 30 percent of all passengers who arrived in the U.S. on a Gulf flight—620,000 passengers total—transferred to a U.S. airline to complete their journeys.
 - Nearly 20 percent (16%) of all Gulf passengers to the U.S., transferred to a U.S. legacy airline, generating \$140 million in revenue for U.S. carriers.
- Passengers who arrived at one of these 13 gateway cities transferred onto U.S. carrier flights to more than 250 destinations, spreading economic benefits across the U.S.
- **Members of Congress are encouraged to support and expand Open Skies, which will ensure continued growth in international aviation and create American jobs in the travel and manufacturing industries.**

Preserve and Continue to Expand the Visa Waiver Program

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) allows pre-screened, pre-approved travelers from participating countries to travel to the United States without obtaining a visa for business or leisure stays of up to 90 days. The 38 closely allied participating countries are required to maintain high security standards and share information with the U.S.

- In 2015, more than 23 million visitors to the U.S.—60 percent of all overseas visitors—arrived through the VWP. These visitors generated \$190 billion in economic output for the U.S. economy, supporting nearly one million jobs.
- The Visa Waiver Program enhances U.S. security because:
 - All VWP travelers are pre-screened through the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before ever stepping onboard a flight to the U.S.
 - VWP travelers to the U.S. are checked against multiple law enforcement and security databases before arrival.
 - Participating countries are required to allow U.S. inspections of their security standards and protocols.
 - VWP countries must promptly report data on all lost and stolen passports.
 - Participating countries must also use biometric passports that conform to stringent international security standards.
- **Members of Congress are encouraged to support policies that strengthen and evolve the Visa Waiver Program.**

Communicate Clear Welcome to Legitimate Travelers

The revised executive order suspends entry to the U.S. for 90 days for nationals of six countries—Iran, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen—traveling on immigrant and non-immigrant visas. It calls for a 20 day review of visa issuing procedures and information sharing on visa applicants between the U.S. and foreign governments, and requests expedited completion of biometric entry-exit tracking at ports of entry.

- Security is a top priority for the U.S. travel community but our approach should also balance the need for an effective and efficient travel system that welcomes legitimate travelers.
- The rollout of the revised executive order was an improvement over the first one in terms of its clarity and precision.
- However, amid growing signs that the initial executive order has made international travelers wary of visiting the U.S., the travel community continues to urge the Trump administration to clearly state and take steps to ensure that legitimate travelers continue to be welcome here.
- Perceptions matter. Reputational fallout is a very real risk, and we must ensure that legitimate international business and leisure visitors feel welcomed to the U.S.
- Inbound international travel is the No. 3 U.S. export, and directly supports 1.1 million jobs.
- **Congress should urge the Administration to welcome legitimate travelers and pursue policies that will encourage visitation from legitimate visitors to the U.S.**

Promote the Travel & Tourism Caucuses

Travel & Tourism Caucuses exist in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The caucuses are made up of Members of Congress who recognize the economic importance of travel and tourism within their communities and the vital need for a collective voice in Congress to support the policy initiatives of our multi-faceted industry.

- The economic benefit of travel and tourism extends to all 50 states and every congressional district. In fact, travel and tourism ranks in the top 10 industries in 49 states and Washington, D.C.
- The Senate Travel and Tourism Caucus is co-chaired by Roy Blunt (R-MO), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Dean Heller (R-NV).
- The House of Representatives Travel and Tourism Caucus is co-chaired by Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Dina Titus (D-NV).
- Encourage members of Congress to join their respective Travel & Tourism Caucus. Senators should contact the offices of Roy Blunt (R-MO), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Brian Schatz (D-HI) or Dean Heller (R-NV). Representatives should contact the offices of Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) or Dina Titus (D-NV).