



Take Action: Urge Congress to Support Visa Reform in the State Department Funding Bill

ABOUT THE BILL: On September 21, 2011, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved the Fiscal Year 2012 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill (S. 1601), which includes important reforms to the U.S. visa system. The full Senate and House will need to approve the Appropriations Committee bill to have it become law.

WHAT'S AT STAKE: The travel industry stands to create more than one million jobs if the visa system is reformed, allowing more international travelers to visit the U.S. Currently, America is losing out to its global competitors on millions of international visitors by making it unnecessarily difficult or, in many cases financially impossible, for people to visit the U.S. Recapturing America's historic share of worldwide overseas travel would create up to an additional 1.3 million U.S. jobs by 2020 compared with 2010 and produce \$859 billion in cumulative additional economic output.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Write or call your Representative and Senators and urge them to ensure that the visa reform provisions in the Senate version are included in the final State Department funding bill approved by both chambers. Visit travelcoalition.org to find your legislators' contact info.

Template Letter

Dear Representative/Senator XX;

Increasing travel to the United States is the most effective form of economic stimulus, but for far too long the U.S. visa system has stood as a barrier for travel to the U.S. Fortunately, important reforms to the U.S. visa system were included in Section 7079 of the Senate's Fiscal Year 2012 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill (S. 1601) that was passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee. As a constituent and

stakeholder in the travel industry, I urge you to ensure that those provisions are included in the final State Department funding bill passed by Congress.

The travel industry can create more than one million jobs if the visa system is reformed and the barriers to international visitation are reduced. Yet studies show that an overwhelming majority of travelers from Brazil, China and India feel that the U.S. is a difficult place to visit. While the State Department currently has a goal of interviewing all visa applicants within 30 days of their application submission, it has failed to meet this performance standard in key markets. S. 1601 directs the State Department to hire enough consular officers to meet the 30 day standard, and requires State to develop a plan to meet demand for nonimmigrant visas in Brazil, China and India over the next five years.

Between 2000 and 2010, the United States' share of global long-haul travel fell from 17 percent to just 12.4 percent. Recapturing America's historic share of worldwide overseas travel would create up to an additional 1.3 million U.S. jobs by 2020 and produce \$859 billion in cumulative additional economic output. The proposed changes in S. 1601 will improve efficiency of the U.S. visa process for legitimate international visitors while at the same time maintaining – and in some cases increasing – security.

Therefore, I ask that you support the visa provisions in Section 7079 of S. 1601 and ensure their inclusion in any final State Department funding bill passed this year by Congress.

Sincerely,

Call Script

***Introduce yourself and state where you are from.*

I am calling to urge Representative/Senator ___ to support the visa reform provisions in the FY2012 State Department funding bill as passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee, and ensure their inclusion in any final State Department funding bill passed this year by Congress.

Increasing travel to the United States is the most effective form of economic stimulus, but for far too long the U.S. visa system has stood as a barrier for travel to the U.S.

The travel industry can create more than one million jobs if the visa system is reformed and the barriers to international visitation are reduced.

Important reforms to the U.S. visa system were included in Section 7079 of the Fiscal Year 2012 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill (S. 1601) that was passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The proposed changes in S. 1601 will improve efficiency of the U.S. visa process for legitimate international visitors while at the same time maintaining – and in some cases increasing – security.

I urge Senator/Representative X to support the visa provisions in Section 7079 of S. 1601 and ensure their inclusion in any final State Department funding bill passed this year by Congress.

Thank you.