



Take Action: Reduce Barriers to International Visitors

Urge Your Representative to Cosponsor H.R. 3039, the “Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011”

ABOUT THE BILL: Introduced by Congressman Joe Heck (R-NV-3), H.R. 3039, the "Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011" will reduce barriers in the U.S. visa system that are currently discouraging international visitors from doing business and traveling here. Among the key highlights of the bill is setting a standard that requires the State Department to process visas within 12 days, and implementing a program that utilizes videoconferencing technology for conducting visa interviews.

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 urge him/her to cosponsor the Welcoming Business Travelers to America Act of 2011 (H.R. 3039). Visit travelcoalition.org to find your legislators' contact info.

Template Letter

Dear Representative X;

As a constituent and stakeholder in the travel industry, I urge you to cosponsor the *Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011* (H.R. 3039). Introduced by Congressman

Joe Heck (R-NV-3), H.R. 3039 will safely reduce barriers in the U.S. visa system that are needlessly discouraging international visitors from doing business and traveling here.

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. H.R. 3039 sets a 12-day processing standard and directs the Secretary of State to use nonimmigrant visa fees to hire foreign service consular officers in China, Brazil and India to meet that standard.

Furthermore, the U.S. has too few consular offices around the world to conduct the required in-person visa interviews. For example, in geographically large countries such as Brazil, China and India, entire families and tour groups must travel hundreds if not thousands of miles to the nearest U.S. Consulate for an in-person interview to apply for a U.S. visa. This added expense and hassle prevents millions of visitors from traveling to our country. H.R. 3039 directs the Secretary of State to implement a visa videoconferencing pilot program, allowing visa interviews to be conducted remotely.

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. Therefore, I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 3039, a common sense approach to creating jobs and strengthening our economy.

Sincerely,

Call Script

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

I am calling to urge Representative ___ to cosponsor H.R. 3039, the *Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011*.

This bill, introduced by Representative Joe Heck (R-NV-3), will safely reduce barriers in the U.S. visa system that are needlessly discouraging international visitors from doing business and traveling here.

Specifically, the bill will set a standard that requires the State Department to process visas within 12 days, and directs the Secretary of State to implement a program that utilizes videoconferencing technology for conducting visa interviews.

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 and pump an additional \$859 billion into the economy.

H.R. 3039 is a common sense approach to creating jobs and strengthening our economy, and so I encourage Representative ___ to cosponsor it.

Thank you.