



## Take Action: Help Our Economy by Improving the International Visa System

### ***Urge Your Senators to Cosponsor S. 1653, the “International Tourism Facilitation Act”***

**ABOUT THE BILL:** Introduced by Tourism Caucus Co-Chairs Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Roy Blunt (R-MO), the "International Tourism Facilitation Act" (S. 1653) calls on the State Department to use its consular resources more effectively to better respond to the rising international travel demand. While the State Department currently has a goal of interviewing all visa applicants within 30 days of their application, it has often failed to meet this standard in key markets like China, India and Brazil.

**WHAT'S AT STAKE:** By failing to keep pace with growth in global long-haul international travel between 2000 and 2010, the U.S. lost the opportunity to welcome 78 million more visitors which would support more than 467,000 American jobs over these years. 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 Senators and urge him/her to cosponsor the International Tourism Facilitation Act. Visit [travelcoalition.org](http://travelcoalition.org) to find your legislators' contact information.

#### **Template Letter**

Dear Senator X;

As a constituent and proud member of the travel industry, I urge you to cosponsor S. 1653, the International Tourism Facilitation Act. Introduced by Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Blunt (R-MO), this legislation calls on the State Department to respond to increased travel demand to the U.S. and encourages the State Department to use its resources more effectively.

International travel is already one of the main drivers of job creation today. But the travel industry can create more than one million additional jobs if the visa system is reformed and we

become more effective in processing visas. 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 like Brazil, China and India. The International Tourism Facilitation Act (S.1653) gives the State Department the ability to retain a larger portion of fees charged for visas in order to spend new funds on personnel needed to process visas more efficiently.

The Act also allows the State Department to waive visa interviews for three additional years (four years total) for individuals who previously held a U.S. visa; allowing State to focus its resources on people never previously vetted. Finally, this legislation instructs the State Department to submit specific plans to meet the forecasted demand for visas over the next decade from key markets.

Between 2000 and 2010, the United States' share of global long-haul travel fell from 17 percent to just 12.4 percent. Recapturing this share of worldwide overseas travel by 2015 and sustaining through 2020 would create up to an additional 1.3 million U.S. jobs and produce \$859 billion in cumulative additional economic output. Therefore, I urge you to cosponsor S. 1653, the International Tourism Facilitation Act, 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 Senator \_\_\_ to cosponsor S. 1653, the *International Tourism Facilitation Act*.

This bill, introduced by Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Blunt (R-MO), will help to create American jobs by encouraging more international visitors to do business in America and travel here.

Specifically, the legislation would allow the State Department to retain additional fees charged for visas in order to spend new funds on Consular officials needed to process visas more efficiently and would allow State to waive visa interviews for three additional years for those people who previously held a U.S. visa, allowing them to focus their resources on people never vetted before.

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.

S. 1653, the International Tourism Facilitation Act is a common sense approach to creating jobs and strengthening our economy, and so I encourage Senator \_\_\_ to cosponsor it.

Thank you.