

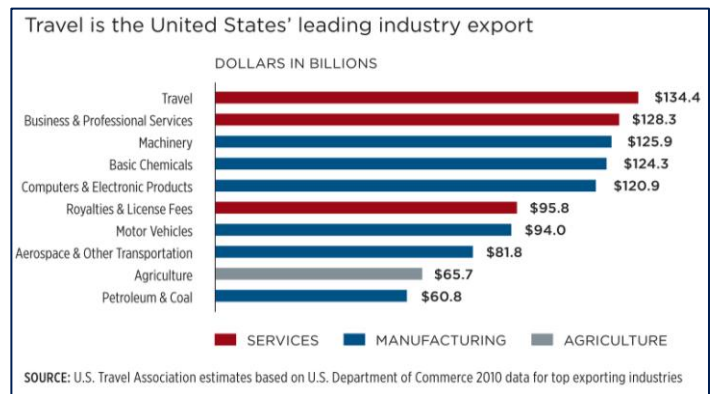
# Ready FOR Takeoff

## A Plan to Create 1.3 Million U.S. Jobs by Welcoming Millions of International Travelers

### Travel = American Jobs, U.S. Exports & Economic Growth

Inbound international travel currently:

- Supports 1.8 million U.S. jobs.
- Top industry export sector – more than \$134 billion in direct travel spending in the U.S.
- Overseas visitors spend on average \$4000 in the U.S. per visit.
- Global travel spending is expected to double over the next decade reaching \$2.1 trillion and making travel an increasingly important contributor to GDP growth for countries able to attract more overseas visitors.



### But Self-Imposed Barriers Limit U.S. Travel Growth and Impose Huge Opportunity Costs

An unnecessarily burdensome U.S. visa system is hurting our nation's ability to grow travel-related exports and employment. In fact, the U.S. has lost market share to other countries amid the global travel boom that took place over the last decade. If America had kept pace with the growth in global overseas travel between 2000 and 2010, 78 million more travelers would have visited the U.S., adding a total of \$606 billion to the economy that could have supported more than 467,000 additional U.S. jobs annually over these years.

The key barriers to increasing overseas travel to America are:

- A highly inefficient and unpredictable visa application approval process.
- Lack of personnel to process and interview visa applicants and lack of access to a U.S. consular facility.
- Poor planning and communication to applicants.

### Taking Down Those Barriers = Huge Opportunity Gains at No Cost to Taxpayers

Recapturing America's historic 17 percent share of worldwide overseas travel would, with little or no cost to taxpayers:

- Attract **98 million** more legitimate visitors.
- Create an additional **1.3 million U.S. jobs** by 2020 compared with 2010.
- Inject **\$859 billion** into the U.S. economy.

Q: What is it about the visa process that is most difficult for you?

|   | CHINA | INDIA | BRAZIL |
|---|-------|-------|--------|
| Distance we have to travel to consulate                       | 23.3% | 4.8%  | 8.4%   |
| Cost of the visa  | 27.9% | 12.4% | 26.3%  |
| Amount of documentation required                              | 12.7% | 22.8% | 43.0%  |
| Concern that getting rejected will impact future applications | 18.1% | 33.8% | 35.5%  |
| Length of time it takes to get an interview                   | 31.7% | 17.0% | 12.8%  |
| No refund on a rejected visa application                      | 30.4% | 12.0% | 18.8%  |
| Other   | 1.9%  | 7.1%  | 9.0%   |

SOURCE: Mandala Research survey of 500 recent visitors from each of three countries, conducted August/September 2010



Discover America Partnership®

# Smart Visa Policy Is the Key to More American Jobs, More U.S. Exports & More Growth

Increasing America's share of overseas travel is a no-brainer! Here's how we can do it:

## 1. Align consular affairs with market demands.

- Issue a Presidential Directive to recapture 17 percent share of worldwide overseas travel and match Western Europe's current share of the long-haul travel market in Brazil, China and India by 2015.
- Include U.S. travel export promotion into the mission of the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs and establish formal goals related to recapturing a 17% share of the overseas travel market.
- Co-sponsor H.R. 3039, to direct the State Department to pilot the use of videoconferencing technology to conduct visa interviews in key markets, such as Brazil, China and India.
- Co-sponsor H.R. 3039, to direct the State Department to prepare long-term strategic plans for opening additional visa offices that will meet visa demand in key markets, such as Brazil, China and India.

## 2. Reduce visa interview wait times to 10 days or fewer and match Western Europe's share of international visitors in Brazil, China and India.

- Co-sponsor H.R. 3039, to formalize use of Limited Non-career Appointment (LNA) consular officers, individuals who do not join the Foreign Service but concentrate solely on processing nonimmigrant visas.
- Hire an estimated 440 new consular officers (Foreign Service & LNAs) divided between Brazil, China and India over the next five years.
- Expand the use of State Department programs that waive the in-person interview for previously vetted and interviewed applicants who are renewing their visas.
- Utilize demand management tools and techniques to improve management and visa processing efficiency.

## 3. Improve planning.

- Assess the impact that visa delays have on overall visa demand and travel exports, and measure the untapped demand for U.S. visas.
- End the artificial limits on visa interview dates and develop a more accurate measure of applicant backlogs.
- Co-sponsor H.R. 3039, to increase transparency by making historical data on visa interview wait times for each consulate available to the public.

## 4. Preserve and expand the Visa Waiver Program.

- Direct the Departments of Homeland Security and State to immediately develop bilateral working groups with nations such as Brazil and Chile, which are interested in, but not yet eligible for, inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Use the working groups to develop frameworks (or road maps) that specify the actions that each country needs to take to be considered for VWP membership.
- Press for passage of S. 497 & H.R. 959, the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2011, which updates the VWP framework to reflect improved capabilities to track travelers entering and exiting the United States and improves annual reporting to increase oversight and transparency.

### Key Growth Markets

Recommendations to attract more visitors from the fastest-growing, highest-spending markets of Brazil, China and India include:

**Brazil:** Department of State (DOS) should develop a formal working group with Brazilian officials that will identify steps Brazil must take to enhance its prospects to qualify for VWP.

**China:** Co-sponsor H.R. 3039, DOS should negotiate an agreement with the Chinese government to grant Chinese travelers visas that are valid for at least five years versus the current one-year visa.

**India:** DOS should expand its Business Executive Program to assist companies in India that offer employees incentive

Learn More and Read the Full Report at [www.smartervisapolicy.org](http://www.smartervisapolicy.org).