

VISIT AMERICA ACT

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. PALLONE, from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 6965]

The Committee on Energy and Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6965) to promote travel and tourism in the United States, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

CONTENTS

	Page
I. Purpose and Summary	4
II. Background and Need for the Legislation	5
III. Committee Hearings	5
IV. Committee Consideration	6
V. Committee Votes	6
VI. Oversight Findings	8
VII. New Budget Authority, Entitlement Authority, and Tax Expenditures	8
VIII. Federal Mandates Statement	8
IX. Statement of General Performance Goals and Objectives	8
X. Duplication of Federal Programs	8
XI. Committee Cost Estimate	8
XII. Earmarks, Limited Tax Benefits, and Limited Tariff Benefits	8
XIII. Advisory Committee Statement	8
XIV. Applicability to Legislative Branch	9
XV. Section-by-Section Analysis of the Legislation	9
XVI. Changes in Existing Law Made by the Bill, as Reported	10
XVII. Minority Views	12

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Visit America Act”.

SEC. 2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.

Section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of 1979 (93 Stat. 1382; 5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) by striking “There shall be in the Department two additional Assistant Secretaries” and inserting “(1) There shall be in the Department 3 additional Assistant Secretaries, including the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism,”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism shall—

“(A) be appointed by the President, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate; and

“(B) report directly to the Under Secretary for International Trade.”.

SEC. 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.

(a) **VISITATION GOALS.**—The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism (referred to in this section as the “Assistant Secretary”), appointed pursuant to section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of 1979, as amended by section 2, shall—

(1) establish an annual visitation goal, consistent with the goals of the travel and tourism strategy developed pursuant to section 4(1), for—

(A) the number of international visitors to the United States; and

(B) the value of travel and tourism commerce;

(2) develop recommendations for achieving the annual goals established pursuant to paragraph (1);

(3) ensure that travel and tourism policy is developed in consultation with—

(A) the Tourism Policy Council;

(B) the Secretary of Homeland Security;

(C) the National Travel and Tourism Office;

(D) Brand USA;

(E) the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board; and

(F) travel industry partners, including public and private destination marketing organizations, travel and tourism suppliers, and labor representatives from these industries;

(4) establish short-, medium-, and long-term timelines for implementing the recommendations developed pursuant to paragraph (2);

(5) conduct Federal agency needs assessments, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, to identify the resources, statutory or regulatory changes, and private sector engagement needed to achieve the annual visitation goals; and

(6) provide assessments and recommendations to—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(C) the public through a publicly accessible website.

(b) **VISA ADJUDICATION.**—The Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall—

(1) explore strategies for improving visitor visa processing with respect to—

(A) the maximum time for processing visas, by visitation type;

(B) regulatory and policy changes needed to meet the visa processing goals referred to in subparagraph (A), including changes regarding technology, processing centers, and training; and

(C) streamlining visa applications and adjudications, including application design and data collection procedures; and

(2) explore opportunities to establish pilot programs to integrate technology into the visitor visa adjudication process, including video conferencing and biometrics.

(c) **DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**—The Assistant Secretary, to the extent feasible, shall—

(1) evaluate, on an ongoing basis, domestic policy options for supporting competitiveness with respect to the strengths, weaknesses, and growth of the domestic travel industry;

(2) develop recommendations and goals to support and enhance domestic tourism, separated by business and leisure; and

(3) engage public and private stakeholders to support domestic tourism.

(d) **WORKFORCE.**—The Assistant Secretary shall—

- (1) consult with the Secretary of Labor to develop strategies and best practices for improving the timeliness and reliability of travel and tourism workforce data;
 - (2) work with the Secretary of Labor and the Bureau of Economic Analysis to improve travel and tourism industry data; and
 - (3) provide recommendations for policy enhancements and efficiencies.
- (e) INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRAVEL FACILITATION.—The Assistant Secretary, in coordination with relevant Federal agencies, shall work to increase and facilitate international business travel to the United States and ensure competitiveness by engaging in, at a minimum—
- (1) facilitating large meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions to be hosted in the United States;
 - (2) emphasizing rural and other destinations rich in cultural heritage or ecological tourism, among other uniquely American destinations, as locations for hosting international meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions in the United States; and
 - (3) facilitating sports and recreation events and activities, which shall be hosted in the United States.
- (f) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—
- (1) INITIAL RECOVERY STRATEGY.—Not later than 1 year after amounts are appropriated to accomplish the purposes of this section, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with public and private stakeholders identified in subsection (a)(3) and public health officials, shall develop and implement a COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy to assist the United States travel and tourism industry to quickly recover from the pandemic.
 - (2) FUTURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.—After assisting in the implementation of the strategy developed pursuant to paragraph (1), the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with appropriate public and private stakeholders, shall develop additional recovery strategies for the travel and tourism industry in anticipation of other unforeseen catastrophic events that would significantly affect the travel and tourism industry, such as hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, and pandemics.
 - (3) COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.—In developing the COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy under paragraph (1) and additional recovery strategies for the travel and tourism industry under paragraph (2), the Assistant Secretary shall conduct cost-benefit analyses that take into account the health and economic effects of public health mitigation measures on the travel and tourism industry.
- (g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—
- (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The Assistant Secretary shall produce an annual forecasting report on the travel and tourism industry, to the extent feasible, which shall include current and anticipated—
 - (A) domestic employment needs;
 - (B) international inbound volume and spending, taking into account the lasting effects of the COVID–19 public health emergency and the impact of the recovery strategy implemented pursuant to subsection (f)(1); and
 - (C) domestic volume and spending, including Federal and State public land travel and tourism data.
 - (2) BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—The Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis should annually update, to the extent feasible, the Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts, including—
 - (A) State level travel and tourism spending data;
 - (B) travel and tourism workforce data for full-time and part-time employment; and
 - (C) Federal and State public lands outdoor recreational activity and tourism spending data.
 - (3) NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OFFICE.—The Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office—
 - (A) in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Analysis, shall report international arrival and spending data on a regular monthly schedule, which shall be made available to the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board and to the public through a publicly available website; and
 - (B) shall include questions in the Survey of International Air Travelers regarding wait-times, visits to public lands, and State data, to the extent applicable.

SEC. 4. TRAVEL AND TOURISM STRATEGY.

Not less frequently than once every 10 years, the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, the Tourism

Policy Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall develop and submit to Congress a 10-year travel and tourism strategy, which shall include—

- (1) the establishment of goals with respect to the number of annual international visitors to the United States and the annual value of travel and tourism commerce in the United States during such 10-year period;
- (2) the resources needed to achieve the goals established pursuant to paragraph (1); and
- (3) recommendations for statutory or regulatory changes that would be necessary to achieve such goals.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD.

Section 3 of the Act of July 19, 1940, entitled “An Act to encourage travel in the United States, and for other purposes” (15 U.S.C. 1546) is amended—

- (1) by striking “SEC. 3.” and all that follows through “The Secretary of the Interior is authorized” and inserting the following:

“SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD; ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

“(a) UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Board’), the members of which shall be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce for 2-year terms from among companies and organizations in the travel and tourism industry.

“(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism shall serve as the Executive Director of the Board.

“(3) EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.—The Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office of the International Trade Administration shall serve as the Executive Secretariat for the Board.

“(4) FUNCTIONS.—The Board’s Charter shall specify that the Board will—

“(A) serve as the advisory body to the Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States;

“(B) advise the Secretary of Commerce on Government policies and programs that affect the United States travel and tourism industry;

“(C) offer counsel on current and emerging issues;

“(D) provide a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to problems related to the travel and tourism industry; and

“(E) provide advice regarding the domestic travel and tourism industry as an economic engine.

“(5) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—The Board shall assist the Assistant Secretary in the development and implementation of the COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy required under section 3(f)(1) of the Visit America Act.

“(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF TOURIST TRAVEL.—The Secretary of Commerce is authorized”; and

- (2) by striking “the Secretary of the Interior to serve” and inserting “the Secretary of Commerce to serve”.

SEC. 6. DATA ON DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.

The Secretary of Commerce, subject to the availability of appropriations, shall collect and make public aggregate data on domestic travel and tourism trends.

SEC. 7. COMPLETION OF PROCEEDING.

If the Secretary of Commerce has, before the date of the enactment of this Act, taken action that in whole or in part implements this Act or the amendments made by this Act, the Secretary is not required to revisit such action, but only to the extent such action is consistent with this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 8. DEFINED TERM.

In this Act, the term “COVID–19 public health emergency”—

- (1) means the public health emergency first declared on January 31, 2020, by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) with respect to COVID–19; and

- (2) includes any renewal of such declaration pursuant to such section 319.

I. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 6965, the “Visit America Act,” establishes the role of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism at the Department of Commerce and requires the Assistant Secretary to develop and implement a coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID–19) pandemic recovery strategy to assist the recovery of the U.S. travel

and tourism industry. The bill also requires the Department of Commerce to develop a ten-year travel and tourism strategy and provides new authorities for the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.

II. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

As a result of the global COVID–19 pandemic, tourism in the United States and travel to the United States declined drastically from 2019 to 2020.¹ Travel spending decreased by 42 percent from 2019 to 2020, amounting to \$492 billion in cumulative losses for the American travel economy.² Further, workers employed in the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries experienced earnings losses as high as 40 percent during the second quarter of 2020.³

The National Travel and Tourism Office, part of the International Trade Administration at the Department of Commerce, is charged with enhancing the international competitiveness of the United States travel and tourism industry.⁴ Currently, the United States is the only G–20 nation to not have a federal agency or cabinet-level official in charge of tourism policy.⁵

III. COMMITTEE HEARINGS

For the purposes of section 3(c) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following hearing was used to develop or consider H.R. 6965:

The Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce held a legislative hearing on May 26, 2022. The hearing was entitled, “Legislative Hearing to Protect Consumers and Strengthen the Economy.” The Subcommittee received testimony from the following witnesses:

- Katlin Kraska, Director of Federal Legislation, Government Relations, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;
- Julie Menin, Former Commissioner, New York City Department of Consumer Affairs;
- Hadley Heath Manning, Vice President for Policy, Independent Women’s Forum;
- Michael O’Neal, Vice President—Corporate Underwriting, First American Title Insurance Company;
- Trista Hamsmith, Founder and Reese’s Mom, Reese’s Purpose;
- Eric D. Hagopian, CEO and President, Pilot Precision Products; and
- Tori Barnes, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Policy, U.S. Travel Association.

¹*How Bad Was 2020 for Tourism? Look at the Numbers*, The New York Times (March 8, 2021).

²U.S. Travel Association, *COVID–19 Travel Industry Research* (www.ustravel.org/toolkit/covid-19-travel-industry-research) (accessed Oct. 6, 2021).

³*Id.*

⁴Department of Commerce, *Travel and Tourism* (<http://www.commerce.gov/tags/tavel-and-tourism>) (accessed Sept. 21, 2022).

⁵House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Testimony of Tori Barnes, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Policy, U.S. Travel Association, *Legislative Hearing to Protect Consumers and Strengthen the Economy*, 117th Cong. (May 26, 2022).

IV. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

H.R. 6965, the “Visit America Act,” was introduced on March 7, 2022, by Representatives Titus (D–NV), Case (D–HI), and Young (R–AK) and was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, as well as the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary. Subsequently, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce on March 8, 2022. The bill was discharged from the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce on September 21, 2022.

On September 21, 2022, the full Committee met in open markup session, pursuant to notice, to consider H.R. 6965 and 23 other bills. During consideration of the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute (AINS), offered by Representative Soto (D–FL), was agreed to by a voice vote. Upon conclusion of consideration of the bill, the full Committee agreed to a motion on final passage offered by Representative Pallone, Chairman of the Committee, to order H.R. 6965 reported favorably to the House, amended, by a roll call vote of 56 yeas to 0 nays.

V. COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list each record vote on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto. The Committee advises that there was one record votes taken on H.R. 6965, including a motion by Mr. Pallone ordering H.R. 6965 favorably reported to the House, amended. The motion on final passage of the bill was approved by a record vote of 56 yeas to 0 nays. The following are the record votes taken during Committee consideration, including the names of those members voting for and against:

Committee on Energy and Commerce
117th Congress

Full Committee

(ratio: 32-26)

ROLL CALL VOTE #142

Bill: **H.R. 6965**, the "Visit America Act"

Vote: Final Passage

Disposition: **AGREED TO** by a roll call vote of 56 yeas to 0 nays

REPRESENTATIVE	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT	REPRESENTATIVE	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
Mr. Pallone	X			Mrs. Rodgers	X		
Mr. Rush	X			Mr. Upton	X		
Ms. Eshoo	X			Mr. Burgess	X		
Ms. DeGette	X			Mr. Scalise			
Mr. Doyle	X			Mr. Latta	X		
Ms. Schakowsky	X			Mr. Guthrie	X		
Mr. Butterfield	X			Mr. McKinley	X		
Ms. Matsui	X			Mr. Kinzinger			
Ms. Castor	X			Mr. Griffith	X		
Mr. Sarbanes	X			Mr. Bilirakis	X		
Mr. McNerney	X			Mr. Johnson	X		
Mr. Welch	X			Mr. Long	X		
Mr. Tonko	X			Mr. Bucshon	X		
Ms. Clarke	X			Mr. Mullin	X		
Mr. Schrader	X			Mr. Hudson	X		
Mr. Cárdenas	X			Mr. Walberg	X		
Mr. Ruiz	X			Mr. Carter	X		
Mr. Peters	X			Mr. Duncan	X		
Mrs. Dingell	X			Mr. Palmer	X		
Mr. Veasey	X			Mr. Dunn	X		
Ms. Kuster	X			Mr. Curtis	X		
Ms. Kelly	X			Ms. Lesko	X		
Ms. Barragán	X			Mr. Pence	X		
Mr. McEachin	X			Mr. Crenshaw	X		
Ms. Blunt Rochester	X			Mr. Joyce	X		
Mr. Soto	X			Mr. Armstrong	X		
Mr. O'Halleran	X						
Ms. Rice	X						
Ms. Craig	X						
Ms. Schrier	X						
Ms. Trahan	X						
Ms. Fletcher	X						

09/21/22

VI. OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the oversight findings and recommendations of the Committee are reflected in the descriptive portion of the report.

VII. NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

Pursuant to 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a statement as to whether this bill contains any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

VIII. FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

IX. STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this legislation is to promote travel and tourism in the United States.

X. DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII, no provision of H.R. 6965 is known to be duplicative of another Federal program, including any program that was included in a report to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139 or the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

XI. COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII, the Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

XII. EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Pursuant to clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI, the Committee finds that H.R. 6965 contains no earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits.

XIII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committee within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act was created by this legislation.

XIV. APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

XV. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 designates that the short title may be cited as the “Visit America Act.”

Sec. 2. Assistant Secretary for Travel And Tourism

Section 2 establishes the role of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism.

Sec. 3. Responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel And Tourism

Subsection (a) requires the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism to establish an annual visitation goal for the number of international visitors to the United States and the value of travel and tourism commerce; develop recommendations to achieve these goals; ensure that travel and tourism policy is developed in consultation with public and private sector organizations; establish short-, medium-, and long-term timelines for implementing the recommendations; and complete an agency needs assessment to achieve visitation goals and provide these assessments to Congress and the public.

Subsection (b) requires the Assistant Secretary to consult with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security on ways to streamline the visa application process and explore opportunities to integrate technology into the visa adjudication process—such as video conferencing and biometrics.

Subsection (c) requires the Assistant Secretary to evaluate domestic policy options and develop recommendations to support competitiveness in the domestic travel industry.

Subsection (d) requires the Assistant Secretary to consult with the Secretary of Labor and the Bureau of Economic Analysis to improve travel and tourism workforce and industry data.

Subsection (e) requires the Assistant Secretary, in coordination with relevant Federal agencies, to increase and facilitate international business travel to the United States, ensure competitiveness by facilitating large meetings and conferences in the United States, and facilitate sports and recreation events and activities hosted in the United States.

Subsection (f) requires the Assistant Secretary to develop and implement a COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy as well as a strategy to address future possible disruptions to the travel and tourism industry, like hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, and pandemics.

Subsection (g) requires the Assistant Secretary to produce an annual forecasting report on the travel and tourism industry. It also requires the Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis to annually update the Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts to report on

international arrival and spending data on a regular monthly basis and to be made public on a publicly available website.

Sec. 4. Travel and tourism strategy

Section 4 requires the Secretary of Commerce in consultation with the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, the Tourism Policy Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a ten-year travel and tourism strategy with visitation goals for the number of annual international visitors and the annual value of travel and tourism commerce in the United States, and recommendations for policy and regulatory changes necessary to achieve those goals.

Sec. 5. United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board

Section 5 establishes the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board with the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism serving as the Executive Director. The Board advises the Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to the Travel and Tourism industry in the United States.

Sec. 6. Data on domestic travel and tourism

Section 6 requires the Secretary of Commerce, subject to the availability of appropriations, to collect and make public aggregate data on domestic travel and tourism trends.

Sec. 7. Completion of proceeding

Section 7 states that if before the date of enactment of this bill the Secretary of Commerce has already taken actions that fulfill a provision within the bill, the Secretary is not required to revisit such action.

Sec. 8. Defined terms

Section 8 defines the term “COVID–19 public health emergency.”

XVI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

ACT OF JULY 19, 1940

AN ACT To encourage travel in the United States, and for other purposes.

* * * * *

[SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized]

SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD; ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) *UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*There is established the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (referred to in this subsection as the “Board”), the members of which shall be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce for 2-year terms from*

among companies and organizations in the travel and tourism industry.

(2) *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.*—*The Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism shall serve as the Executive Director of the Board.*

(3) *EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.*—*The Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office of the International Trade Administration shall serve as the Executive Secretariat for the Board.*

(4) *FUNCTIONS.*—*The Board's Charter shall specify that the Board will—*

(A) serve as the advisory body to the Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States;

(B) advise the Secretary of Commerce on Government policies and programs that affect the United States travel and tourism industry;

(C) offer counsel on current and emerging issues;

(D) provide a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to problems related to the travel and tourism industry; and

(E) provide advice regarding the domestic travel and tourism industry as an economic engine.

(5) *RECOVERY STRATEGY.*—*The Board shall assist the Assistant Secretary in the development and implementation of the COVID-19 public health emergency recovery strategy required under section 3(f)(1) of the Visit America Act.*

(b) *ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF TOURIST TRAVEL.*—*The Secretary of Commerce is authorized to create an advisory committee to consist of a representative from each of the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Commerce, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Department of Transportation, as may be designated by such Departments or agencies, respectively, and such additional members, representatives of the various sections of the Nation, including transportation and accommodations agencies, not to exceed six members, to be appointed by [the Secretary of the Interior to serve] the Secretary of Commerce to serve at his pleasure. Meetings of the committee shall be held at the request of the Secretary for the purpose of making recommendations concerning the promotion of tourist travel under the provisions of this Act. The members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services as members, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for such necessary travel and other expenses in connection with their attendance at committee meetings as may be authorized or approved by the Secretary.*

* * * * *

XVII. MINORITY VIEWS

We wish to provide additional viewpoints in the filing of this report. In May, the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce held a subcommittee legislative hearing which included two travel and tourism related bills. First H.R. 6965 the Visit America Act, introduced by Representatives Titus, Young, and Case. Secondly, the Subcommittee considered H.R. 7820, the Travel and Tourism Act, introduced by Representatives Dunn, Soto, and Salazar.

H.R. 7820 represents bipartisan consensus legislation from members of this subcommittee, and yet was not allowed to proceed in tandem with the legislation subject to this committee report, despite both measures receiving support together at the same legislative hearing. For instance, during the May 26, 2022 Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce legislative hearing, where both H.R. 7820 and H.R. 6965 were considered together, Subcommittee Chairwoman Schakowsky said both bills “will boost our travel and tourism industry which we certainly want to do at this time;” Chairman Pallone even said H.R. 7820 will “help strengthen our economy by boosting the travel and tourism industry.” Chairman Pallone went on to say, “It is very important to my district—an industry that desperately is trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

If these statements of support were not enough, it was even the understanding of Representative Soto, the Democratic lead of H.R. 7820 that this bill would move in tandem with H.R. 6965. Specifically, Representative Soto said “As a sponsor of the Travel and Tourism Act, I want to make clear our intent is to have the bill be complimentary of the Visit America Act, and not a substitute for it . . . is it your understanding, and would you support moving the bills through the committee through an open amendment process to ensure the proposers are complimentary to each other . . .”

It appears there was a bipartisan understanding that both H.R. 7820 and H.R. 6965 would move through the Committee together. However, that took a recent change when the Majority set aside regular order to move H.R. 6965 directly from a subcommittee legislative hearing to a full committee markup, prohibiting the ability of subcommittee members to debate and fine tune the legislation, despite it being clearly requested from the Democratic sponsor of H.R. 7820.

If the Majority would have considered H.R. 7820 during a markup, members would have learned it, notably, reflected other new developments in the tourism and travel industry, such as the sharing economy and other innovations that provide flexibility for consumers and new sources of income for many Americans. Members would have also learned H.R. 7820 did not create a new position at the Department of Commerce reporting to the Under Secretary

for International Trade, a provision which was included in H.R. 6965.

We are disappointed H.R. 7820 did not receive its same day in the Committee that H.R. 6965 did. However, Republicans will certainly continue to press for the language of that legislation be incorporated in future discussions as we continue our leadership in recovery from businesses being shuttered during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Sincerely,

CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS,
*Republican Leader, Com-
mittee on Energy and
Commerce.*

GUS M. BILIRAKIS,
*Republican Leader, Sub-
committee on Consumer
Protection and Commerce.*

○