

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4304

To designate the Republic of Korea as a program country under the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 10, 2005

Mr. MORAN of Virginia (for himself, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. McCOTTER, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. CAPUANO, and Mr. BLUMENAUER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To designate the Republic of Korea as a program country under the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) The Republic of Korea has proven dedica-
6 tion to freedom and friendship with the United
7 States. The country has exemplified true dedication
8 as allies to the United States against tyranny.

1 (2) The United States and the country have
2 close historical and military ties and the country has
3 been designated a major non-NATO ally.

4 (3) Korean history provides pioneering exam-
5 ples of constitutional democracy and religious toler-
6 ance throughout Asia.

7 (4) The United States is home to over
8 2,000,000 individuals of Korean heritage and ances-
9 try.

10 (5) Korean immigrants have contributed greatly
11 to the success of industry and agriculture in the
12 United States.

13 (6) Since the end of the Korean Conflict in
14 1953, the Republic of Korea has become a stable,
15 democratic nation.

16 (7) The Republic of Korea has adopted eco-
17 nomic policies that promote free markets and rapid
18 economic growth. The Republic of Korea is the
19 world's eleventh largest economy.

20 (8) The Republic of Korea is the seventh larg-
21 est trading partner of the United States and the
22 fifth largest market for United States agricultural
23 products.

24 (9) The Republic of Korea has been a staunch
25 ally and supporter of the efforts of the United

1 States with respect to the global war on terrorism,
2 Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi
3 Freedom.

4 (10) The Republic of Korea demonstrated its
5 commitment to the United States and to the global
6 war on terrorism by supporting continued operations
7 in Afghanistan.

8 (11) The Republic of Korea has further dem-
9 onstrated its commitment by committing over 3,000
10 troops to the cause of freedom and liberty in the
11 peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

12 (12) The Secretary of Homeland Security and
13 Secretary of State administer the visa waiver pro-
14 gram, which allows citizens from 27 countries, in-
15 cluding the French Republic and the Federal Repub-
16 lic of Germany, to visit the United States as tourists
17 without visas.

18 (13) The Republic of Korea unilaterally re-
19 pealed the visa requirement for United States citi-
20 zens traveling to the Republic of Korea for 90 days
21 or less.

22 (14) More than 626,000 citizens from the Re-
23 public of Korea visit the United States each year,
24 contributing to the local economies in the areas in
25 which they visit.

1 (15) The United States Embassy in Seoul is
2 the busiest visa issuing consulate in the world and
3 processes an average of 2,000 visas a day.

4 (16) During calendar year 2004, a total of
5 626,595 Korean citizens visited the United States,
6 an increase of three percent over calendar year
7 2003.

8 (17) According to the United States Depart-
9 ment of Commerce, overall tourism dollars spent in
10 the United States by tourists from the Republic of
11 Korea exceeded \$1,000,000,000 in fiscal year 2004.

12 (18) Currently all potential Republic of Korea
13 travelers seeking to obtain a travel visa to the
14 United States must apply at the United States Em-
15 bassy in Seoul, regardless of their place of residence
16 in the Republic of Korea.

17 (19) The United States consular affairs office
18 at the United States Embassy in Seoul has not been
19 able to meet the growing demand for nonimmigrant
20 visas to the United States due to lack of space and
21 personnel, resulting in unnecessary delays, frustra-
22 tion, and loss of economic opportunity for the
23 United States.

24 (20) The Republic of Korea will or has met all
25 deadlines set by the Department of Homeland Secu-

1 rity with respect to passport and biometric stand-
2 ards.

3 **SEC. 2. DESIGNATING THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA A VISA**
4 **WAIVER PROGRAM COUNTRY.**

5 Effective on the date of the enactment of this Act,
6 and notwithstanding section 217(c) of the Immigration
7 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(c)), the Republic of
8 Korea shall be deemed a designated program country for
9 purposes of the visa waiver program established under sec-
10 tion 217 of such Act.

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