

Taylor	Viscolosky	Weller
Terry	Walberg	Westmoreland
Thompson (CA)	Walden (OR)	Wexler
Thompson (MS)	Walz (MN)	Whitfield (KY)
Thornberry	Wamp	Wilson (NM)
Tiahrt	Wasserman	Wilson (OH)
Tiberi	Schultz	Wilson (SC)
Towns	Waters	Wittman (VA)
Tsongas	Watson	Wolf
Turner	Watt	Woolsey
Udall (CO)	Waxman	Wu
Udall (NM)	Weiner	Yarmuth
Upton	Welch (VT)	Young (AK)
Van Hollen	Weldon (FL)	Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—19

Cannon	Hensarling	Speier
Capps	Hobson	Stark
Cubin	Klein (FL)	Tierney
Davis, David	Lewis (KY)	Velázquez
Dicks	Miller (FL)	Walsh (NY)
Gingrey	Shuler	
Gutierrez	Simpson	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members have 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1801

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on additional motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken tomorrow.

TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3232) to establish a non-profit corporation to communicate United States entry policies and otherwise promote tourist, business, and scholarly travel to the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3232

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Travel Promotion Act of 2008”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. The Corporation for Travel Promotion.
- Sec. 3. Accountability measures.
- Sec. 4. Matching public and private funding.
- Sec. 5. Travel Promotion Fund fees.
- Sec. 6. Investment of Funds.
- Sec. 7. Prohibition on use of funds.
- Sec. 8. Amendments to the International Travel Act of 1961.
- Sec. 9. Definitions.
- Sec. 10. G.A.O. study

SEC. 2. THE CORPORATION FOR TRAVEL PROMOTION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Corporation for Travel Promotion is established as a non-profit corporation. The Corporation shall not be an agency or establishment of the United States Government. The Corporation shall be subject to the provisions of the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act (sec. 29–301.01 et seq., D.C. Official Code), to the extent that such provisions are consistent with this section, and shall have the powers conferred upon a nonprofit corporation by that Act to carry out its purposes and activities.

(b) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall have a board of directors of 15 members, appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, but not before consultation with the Secretaries of Homeland Security, State, and Education, as appropriate, each of whom is a United States citizen, and of whom—

(A) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the hotel accommodations sector;

(B) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the restaurant sector;

(C) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the retail sector, or in associations representing that sector;

(D) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the small business sector, or in associations representing that sector;

(E) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the advertising sector;

(F) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the attractions sector;

(G) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the recreation sector;

(H) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the research, development, or manufacturing sector;

(I) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the financial services sector;

(J) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the passenger air sector;

(K) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the car rental sector;

(L) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience as an official at the state and municipal level, or in associations of such officials;

(M) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in the higher education sector and in coordinating international scholarly conferences in the United States;

(N) one shall have appropriate expertise and experience in immigration law and policy, including visa requirements and United States entry procedures; and

(O) one shall have appropriate expertise in matters relating to homeland security policy, including border and travel security and facilitation programs.

(2) INCORPORATION.—The members of the initial board of directors shall serve as incorporators and shall take whatever actions are necessary to establish the Corporation under the District of Columbia Non-profit Corporation Act (sec. 29–301.01 et seq.).

(3) TERM OF OFFICE.—The term of office of each member of the board appointed by the Secretary shall be 3 years, except that, of the members first appointed—

(A) 3 shall be appointed for terms of 1 year;

(B) 4 shall be appointed for terms of 2 years; and

(C) 4 shall be appointed for terms of 3 years.

(4) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the board shall not affect its power, but shall be filled in the manner required by this section. Any member whose term has expired may serve until the member's successor has taken office, or until the end of the calendar year in which the member's term has expired, whichever is earlier. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration

of the term for which that member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term. No member of the board shall be eligible to serve more than 2 consecutive full terms.

(5) ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN.—Members of the board shall annually elect one of their members to be chairman and elect 1 or more of their members as a vice chairman or vice chairmen.

(6) STATUS AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, no member of the board may be considered to be a Federal employee of the United States by virtue of his or her service as a member of the board.

(7) COMPENSATION; EXPENSES.—No member of the board shall receive any compensation from the Federal Government or the Corporation by virtue of his or her service as a member of the board. Each member of the board shall be paid actual travel expenses and per diem in lieu of subsistence expenses when away from his or her usual place of residence, in accordance with section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall have a President, and such other officers as may be named and appointed by the board for terms and at rates of compensation fixed by the board. No individual other than a citizen of the United States may be an officer of the Corporation. The corporation may hire and fix the compensation of such employees as may be necessary to carry out its purposes. No officer or employee of the Corporation may receive any salary or other compensation (except for compensation for services on boards of directors of other organizations that do not receive funds from the Corporation, on committees of such boards, and in similar activities for such organizations) from any source other than the Corporation for services rendered during the period of his or her employment by the Corporation. Service by any officer on boards of directors of other organizations, on committees of such boards, and in similar activities for such organizations shall be subject to annual advance approval by the board and subject to the provisions of the Corporation's Statement of Ethical Conduct. All officers and employees shall serve at the pleasure of the board.

(2) NONPOLITICAL NATURE OF APPOINTMENT.—No political test or qualification shall be used in selecting, appointing, promoting, or taking other personnel actions with respect to officers, agents, or employees of the Corporation.

(d) NONPROFIT AND NONPOLITICAL NATURE OF CORPORATION.—

(1) STOCK.—The Corporation shall have no power to issue any shares of stock, or to declare or pay any dividends.

(2) PROFIT.—No part of the income or assets of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any director, officer, employee, or any other individual except as salary or reasonable compensation for services.

(3) POLITICS.—The Corporation may not contribute to or otherwise support any political party or candidate for elective public office.

(4) SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING LOBBYING ACTIVITIES.—It is the sense of Congress that the Corporation established under this Act should not engage in any lobbying activities with any employee or branch of the Federal Government in favor of or in opposition to any political issue.

(e) DUTIES AND POWERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall develop and execute a plan to—

(A) provide useful information to foreign tourists, business people, students, scholars, scientists and others interested in traveling

to the United States, including the distribution of material provided by the Federal Government concerning entry requirements, required documentation, fees, and processes, to prospective travelers, travel agents, tour operators, meeting planners, foreign governments, travel media and other international stakeholders;

(B) identify and address perceptions in other countries regarding United States entry policies that tend to limit attempts to travel to the United States;

(C) maximize the economic and diplomatic benefits of travel to the United States by promoting the United States of America to world travelers through the use of, but not limited to, all forms of advertising, outreach to trade shows, and other appropriate promotional activities; and

(D) identify opportunities and strategies to promote tourism to rural and urban areas equally.

(2) SPECIFIC POWERS.—In order to carry out the purposes of this section, the Corporation may—

(A) obtain grants from and make contracts with individuals and private companies, State, and Federal agencies, organizations, and institutions;

(B) hire or accept the voluntary services of consultants, experts, advisory boards, and panels to aid the Corporation in carrying out its purposes; and

(C) take such other actions as may be necessary to accomplish the purposes set forth in this section.

(f) OPEN MEETINGS.—Meetings of the board of directors of the Corporation, including any committee of the board, shall be open to the public. The board may, by majority vote, close any such meeting only for the time necessary to preserve the confidentiality of commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential, to discuss personnel matters, or to discuss legal matters affecting the Corporation, including pending or potential litigation.

(g) MAJOR CAMPAIGNS.—The board may not authorize the Corporation to obligate or expend more than \$25,000,000 on any advertising campaign, promotion, or related effort unless—

(1) the obligation or expenditure is approved by an affirmative vote of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of the board present at the meeting;

(2) at least 8 members of the board are present at the meeting at which it is approved; and

(3) each member of the board has been given at least 3 days advance notice of the meeting at which the vote is to be taken and the matters to be voted upon at that meeting.

(h) FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY.—

(1) FISCAL YEAR.—The Corporation shall establish as its fiscal year the 12-month period beginning on October 1.

(2) BUDGET.—The Corporation shall adopt a budget for each fiscal year.

(3) ANNUAL AUDITS.—The Corporation shall engage an independent accounting firm to conduct an annual financial audit of the Corporation's operations and shall publish the results of the audit.

SEC. 3. ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES.

(a) OBJECTIVES.—The Board shall establish annual objectives for the Corporation for each fiscal year subject to approval by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State. The Corporation shall establish a marketing plan for each fiscal year not less than 60 days before the beginning of that year and provide a copy of the plan, and any revisions thereof, to the Secretary.

(b) BUDGET.—The board shall transmit a copy of the Corporation's budget for the

forthcoming fiscal year to the Secretary not less than 60 days before the beginning of each fiscal year, together with an explanation of any expenditure provided for by the budget in excess of \$5,000,000 for the fiscal year. The Corporation shall make a copy of the budget and the explanation available to the public and shall provide public access to the budget and explanation on the Corporation's website.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Corporation shall submit an annual report for the preceding fiscal year to the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Homeland Security for transmittal to Congress on or before the 15th day of May of each year. The report shall include—

(1) a comprehensive and detailed report of the Corporation's operations, activities, financial condition, and accomplishments under this Act;

(2) a comprehensive and detailed inventory of amounts obligated or expended by the Corporation during the preceding fiscal year;

(3) a detailed description of each in-kind contribution, its fair market value, the individual or organization responsible for contributing, its specific use, and a justification for its use within the context of the Corporation's mission;

(4) an objective and quantifiable measurement of its progress, on an objective-by-objective basis, in meeting the objectives established by the board;

(5) an explanation of the reason for any failure to achieve an objective established by the board, and any revisions or alterations to the Corporation's objectives under subsection (a);

(6) a comprehensive and detailed report of the Corporation's operations and activities to promote tourism in rural and urban areas; and

(7) such recommendations as the Corporation deems appropriate.

SEC. 4. MATCHING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF TRAVEL PROMOTION FUND.—There is hereby established in the Treasury a fund which shall be known as the "Travel Promotion Fund".

(b) FUNDING.—

(1) FIRST YEAR.—For fiscal year 2009, the Secretary of the Treasury, not earlier than October 1, 2008, and not before the Secretary has appointed all members of the Corporation's board of directors, may transfer to the Corporation such sums as may be necessary, but not to exceed \$10,000,000, subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section to cover its initial expenses and activities under this Act. At the earliest practicable date, the Corporation shall reimburse the Treasury any such amounts borrowed from the Treasury, with at least 50 percent reimbursed before October 1, 2011, and the remainder reimbursed before October 1, 2013. Reimbursement shall include interest at a rate determined by the Treasury taking into consideration current market yields on outstanding Treasury securities of comparable maturities and including any additional charges determined by the Secretary of the Treasury to cover any probable losses and reasonable administrative costs. The Secretary of the Treasury shall determine and assess penalties to be applied for late payments of principal or interest and other Federal credit terms designed to minimize Federal exposure to loss, consistent with the Federal Credit Reform Act and other applicable Federal credit policies.

(2) SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—For each of fiscal years 2010 through 2013, from amounts deposited in the general fund of the Treasury during the preceding fiscal year from fees under section 5, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer not more than \$100,000,000 to the

Fund, which shall be made available to the Corporation, subject to subsections (c), (d), and (e), to carry out its functions under this Act. Transfers shall be made by the Secretary of the Treasury at least quarterly on the basis of estimates by the Secretary of the Treasury, determined in consultation with the Board, of contributions made to the Corporation by non-Federal sources, and proper adjustments shall be made in amounts subsequently transferred to the extent prior estimates were in excess or less than actual contributions from non-Federal sources.

(c) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall make available to the Corporation from amounts available in the Travel Promotion Fund—

(A) for fiscal year 2010, twice the amount that will be collected from non-Federal sources by the Corporation pursuant to section 4(b)(2) of this Act and not to exceed \$100,000,000; and

(B) for subsequent fiscal years, an amount equal to the amount that will be collected from non-Federal sources by the Corporation pursuant to section 4(b)(2) of this Act and not to exceed \$100,000,000.

(2) GOODS AND SERVICES.—For the purpose of determining the amount of matching funds, other than money, available to the Corporation—

(A) the fair market value, as determined by the Corporation, of goods and services (including advertising) contributed to the Corporation for use under this Act may be included in the determination; but

(B) the fair market value of such goods and services may not account for more than 65 percent of the matching requirement for the Corporation in any fiscal year.

(3) RIGHT OF REFUSAL.—The Corporation may decline to accept any contribution in kind that it determines to be inappropriate, not useful, or commercially worthless.

(d) GRANT OFFSET.—For a given fiscal year, the Secretary of the Treasury shall reduce the total amount of funding to be transferred to the Corporation from the Travel Promotion Fund by the amount of grants received by the Corporation pursuant to section 2(e)(2)(A) to be used during that fiscal year.

(e) LIMITATION.—The Corporation shall not expend funds or obligate to expend funds that will exceed total amounts received by the Corporation for a given fiscal year.

SEC. 5. TRAVEL PROMOTION FUND FEES.

Section 217(h)(3)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(h)(3)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in clause (ii), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) set for an amount that includes an additional amount of not less than \$10 above the amount set under clause (i).

The additional amount required under clause (iii) shall be transferred to the Treasury for the purpose of offsetting appropriations made to the Corporation for Travel Promotion established in section 2 of the Travel Promotion Act of 2008, according to the requirements of section 4 of such Act. Such additional amount may be reduced if the secretary of the Treasury determines that the additional amount is not necessary to ensure that the Corporation is fully funded.”

SEC. 6. INVESTMENT OF FUNDS.

Pending disbursement pursuant to a program, plan, or project, the Corporation may invest funds received by the Corporation only in obligations of the United States or any agency thereof, in general obligations of

any State or any political subdivision thereof, in any interest-bearing account or certificate of deposit of a bank that is a member of the Federal Reserve System, or in obligations fully guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States. The Secretary of the Treasury shall reduce the total amount of funding for a given fiscal year to be transferred from the Travel Promotion Fund to the Corporation by the amount of interest earned by the Corporation as a result of its investments pursuant to this section for the preceding fiscal year.

SEC. 7. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.

No funds raised by the Treasury Department's Travel Promotion Fund or the Corporation for Travel Promotion may be used to directly promote or advertise a specific corporation.

SEC. 8. AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ACT OF 1961.

(a) POWERS AND DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.—Section 201 of the International Travel Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2122) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence of the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “and by the United States National Tourism Organization Act of 1996”; and

(B) by striking “United States National Tourism Organization” and inserting “Corporation for Travel Promotion (established by section 3 of the Travel Promotion Act of 2008)”;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking “United States National Tourism Organization” and inserting “Corporation for Travel Promotion”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“Such plan may not include a comprehensive international advertising campaign relating to critical tourism functions.”.

(b) TOURISM POLICY COUNCIL.—

(1) MEMBERSHIP.—Subsection (b) of section 301 of the International Travel Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2124) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraphs (8) through (10);

(B) by redesignating paragraph (11) as paragraph (13);

(C) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following new paragraphs:

“(8) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

“(9) The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security.

“(10) The Assistant Secretary of U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security.

“(11) The Secretary of Education.”; and

(D) in paragraph (13) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B) of this paragraph), by inserting “, in consultation with other members of the Council” at the end before the period.

(2) MEETINGS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended to read as follows:

“(d) The Council shall meet not less than 2 times a year. For the purposes of conducting business, each member of the Council may appoint a designee to represent such member during one or more meetings of the Council.”.

(3) INVOLVEMENT OF FEDERAL AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) Members of the Council shall provide the Corporation for Travel Promotion with timely information regarding documentation and procedures required for admission to the United States and regarding strategies planned by any Federal department or agency to promote travel to the United States for tourism, business, study, scholarship, scientific exchange, or other purposes, so that the Corporation for Travel Promotion may

better conduct its communications and promotional activities.”.

(4) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (g)(3) of such section is amended by striking “United States National Tourism Organization” and inserting “Corporation for Travel Promotion”.

(5) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—Subsection (h) of such section is amended by striking “President of the United States National Tourism Organization” and inserting “President of the Corporation for Travel Promotion”.

(c) REPEAL OF AUTHORITIES RELATING TO THE UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM PROMOTION ADVISORY BOARD.—Section 210 of the Department of Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2003 (contained in title II of division B of Public Law 108-7; 117 Stat. 78-79; 22 U.S.C. 2122 note) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (b) through (d); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (b).

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the board of directors of the Corporation.

(2) CORPORATION.—The term “Corporation” means the Corporation for Travel Promotion established by section 2.

(3) FUND.—The term “Fund” means the Travel Promotion Fund established by section 4.

(4) SECRETARY.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 10. G.A.O. STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Government Accountability Office shall initiate a study to assess barriers to entry into the United States by foreign travelers. The GAO shall consult with the Department of Homeland Security, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of the Treasury, as necessary.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the GAO shall report the findings to the appropriate Congressional committees. The report shall include—

(1) the GAO's findings on specific barriers to entry into the United States by foreign travelers; and

(2) recommendations for initiatives that may reduce those barriers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act, was introduced by Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. BLUNT and will help spur the tourism industry in the

United States by creating a Corporation For Travel Promotion within the Department of Commerce. This corporation will be funded by private sector money and special user fees.

Madam Speaker, I urge the bill's adoption.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act of 2008. This legislation would establish the Corporation for Travel Promotion as a nonprofit corporation. The core mission would be to promote tourism in the United States and provide travel information to people around the world.

I am a cosponsor of the bill and support promoting the country's tourism industry. Spending by international travelers while in this country is defined as a U.S. export, and many have said that it is strong U.S. export numbers that have kept the economy growing over the last few quarters, despite a slowdown in other parts of the economy and the huge problems that have presented themselves in the financial markets.

Streamlining travel and tourism promotion through a not-for-profit corporation that does not require taxpayer funds will go a long way to help these industries and our economy.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. Let me express my gratitude to the Chair of the subcommittee for his leadership, as well as to the ranking member, Mr. WHITFIELD, for his efforts, as well as the Chair and ranking member of the full committee, Messrs. DINGELL and BARTON.

I am pleased to join with the minority whip, my friend ROY BLUNT, and 244 bipartisan House cosponsors to encourage support for the Travel Promotion Act of 2008. This bill will reverse the decline in the number of overseas visitors coming to the United States.

In a global economy, the world travel market is important. It means jobs and new business opportunities. This is a market that is growing, it is expanding, but our share of it keeps getting smaller. Overseas tourists, scientists, businessmen and students are going elsewhere, put off by the red tape and confusing guidelines for entry into the United States. Even the weak dollar is not enticing enough visitors to reverse this trend.

This drop is not only impacting our economy negatively, but we are missing an important opportunity to improve our image in the world. Data clearly demonstrates that it will help improve our image across the globe by connecting visitors with the most effective ambassadors that we have, the American people.

Once here, foreign visitors get to know us, who we are as a people and our values. This promotes respect for America and for Americans. It helps make the world a safer place for all of us, and it is the most cost-effective public diplomacy initiative we could ever undertake, at no cost to the American taxpayers.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the strong bipartisan support for the legislation, and close my remarks by urging the entire House to vote for its passage.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the effort and the time that was put into this particular proposal by the minority whip, Mr. BLUNT. We all are in his debt.

Madam Speaker, Once in awhile, this House gets it just right. And when that happens, it's usually because we're working well together, across the aisle. Today I'm very pleased to join with the Minority Whip, my friend ROY BLUNT and with 244 bipartisan House cosponsors—in bringing to the floor the Travel Promotion Act of 2008. Without the support of so many on both sides of the aisle, as well as their staffers, this day would not be possible.

The bill addresses the sharp decline in the number of overseas visitors to the United States. The world travel market is expanding but our share is getting smaller. Overseas tourists and businessmen and students are going elsewhere—even though the weak dollar should make the U.S. a cheap vacation. This drop has been felt in every sector of our economy, and more importantly—in our relationship with the rest of the world.

The reason is painfully simple. We don't make a coherent effort to tell America's story, to say to foreign visitors that they are welcome. Or to explain the confusing and sometimes intimidating rules and delays and even indignities that have become part of our visa and border entry process for foreigners since September 11, 2001.

Let me make clear that most of these rules are absolutely critical to our national security. And that we're constantly working to improve them.

The problem is most overseas visitors don't know that. And that what they do know comes from the echo chamber of the foreign press, which is often all too happy to exploit the horror stories about Fortress America—stories which then get repeated over and over again.

A constituent of mine on Cape Cod—where travel and tourism is literally the lifeblood of our local economy—described it as trying to entice a patron to a restaurant. First, he said, you detain and search the customer. Maybe pull his credit record and ask about past parking tickets and other legal transgressions. Then you hope he'll wander in for an expensive meal.

Even official visitors are not immune. Not too long ago the leader of a delegation from the Russian Duma visiting Capitol Hill concluded our inter-parliamentary meetings by saying he had thoroughly enjoyed our time together—and that he was never, under any circumstances, returning to the United States again. All because of the way he was treated during the entry process.

We are one of the only nations in the world that leaves the foreign travel marketplace to

chance, with no official strategy to compel foreigners to visit the United States. The economic impact is staggering. The drop in foreign travel to the U.S. since 9/11 translates into a loss of \$94 billion in visitor spending. A loss of \$16 billion in tax revenue. And the loss of 200,000 American jobs in nearly every congressional district in this nation. No city in the United States has been hit harder than Boston.

In that spirit, I believe that this proposal will inject much needed capital into the American economy. Travel and tourism, when the sector is doing well, drives economic growth and creates opportunity at every level of the economy: from the airlines, to the hotel staff, to the cooks and dishwashers, to the tourguides. This bill will drive growth and create jobs here at home.

Even worse, is the effect on the already-tarnished face of the United States around the globe. If we're really worried about the distortions about us learned in madrassas, the best antidote is to encourage a first-hand look at our country and our people.

The Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight, which I chair, recently concluded a series of hearings on America's declining image in the world. The conclusions were overwhelming and deeply alarming.

Zogby International found that "Arabs who know Americans, Arabs who visited America . . . they tend to like our people, our culture, our products and our values more."

The same poll found that people who say "yes" when asked, "Have you been to the United States, or would you like to come to the United States?" are 25–30 points more favorable than those who say "no". The survey also found that students who visit the United States have more positive views about us than non-visitors by a factor of 10 percent—and that this favorable reaction was also shared by their family and friends.

One of the key recommendations for Congress from the bipartisan U.S.-Muslim Engagement Project, is to expand exchange programs "with a smarter targeting of visa restrictions to enable Muslims who pose a low security risk, especially journalists, business people, and religious leaders, to enter the U.S. more easily."

Travel nearly always changes lives and attitudes for the better. Both the visitor and host open their minds and hearts to new ideas—and to each other. We all know that the best ambassadors for our fundamental values are ordinary Americans. Once here, foreign visitors get to know us and our good intentions. When they return home, they tell family and friends about our cities and towns, our beaches and mountains, our ballparks and skyscrapers and farms and museums. This is an idealistic vision, but it is one that is supported by reams of studies and data.

To discourage travel to the U.S. is to squander our best resource in the war of ideas: the American people. And as a consequence, an entire generation of future world leaders will grow up knowing as little about us as we do about them. There is one thing that is certain—if we continue down this road, we will live in a safer and less secure world.

To promote America, we must promote travel. That's Public Diplomacy 101. Toward that end, H.R. 3232 would establish the non-profit Corporation for Travel Promotion, at no expense to the taxpayer and with enormous eco-

nomie benefits in red and blue congressional districts across the Nation.

That's why H.R. 3232 enjoys the support of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Olympic Committee, National Association of Manufacturers and 50 State tourism directors and thousands of mom-and-pop business that benefit from overseas travelers.

As Senator DICK LUGAR remarked recently, we as a Nation have become "inhospitable". And I'm pleased to report that Senator LUGAR signed on last week as the 50th cosponsor of the Senate companion of H.R. 3232. Followed yesterday by Senator CASEY as number 51—yet more evidence of the bipartisan nature of this legislation.

In that spirit, I again want to express my appreciation for the leadership of Congressman BLUNT, and that of Chairman DINGELL and Subcommittee Chairman RUSH, as well as our colleagues on the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees and their respective staffs, in working so cooperatively to move the bill to the floor. As one constructive element of those discussions, I would like to specifically note my expectation that the program to market America abroad will create business opportunities for marketing and advertising professionals for minority—and women-owned businesses.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation, and look forward to joining with our colleagues in the Senate to enact it into law in the very near future.

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman who represents probably the biggest destination of domestic tourists and foreign tourists, the gentleman from Orlando, Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today as a proud supporter and cosponsor of H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act. I would like to tell you why I support it, how it works and what the benefits are.

Why I support it, I represent the world's number one vacation destination, Orlando, Florida. We have 49 million tourists a year, mainly because my fine city is home to Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World and many other exciting theme parks.

Forty-nine million tourists a year represents 46 million tourists domestically, but only 3 million internationally. You would think that Orlando and the other tourist destinations throughout the United States would be a good value now for European travelers, particularly with the weak American dollar. But we are not seeing that. In fact, our international tourism numbers are down to levels lower than they were before 9/11. Even though domestic travel is up 13 percent, international travel is down 6 percent.

Other countries spend millions of dollars to promote international tourism. We don't. Unfortunately, a lot of travelers in Europe and other continents mistakenly think that the process of entry and visas and security is a lot more complicated than it really is.

So, how would this legislation work? This legislation provides \$200 million

to promote international tourism through marketing overseas and communicating U.S. security and entry policies. It spends this \$200 million without one penny being charged to taxpayers. Half of the money comes from the private sector, the other half is paid for by foreign travelers.

Now, what is the benefit of this legislation? It will create thousands of jobs. One of my employers alone provides 60,000 jobs. One out of four people in my area is employed in the tourism industry.

Expert studies show that this legislation will generate up to \$1 billion a year in additional tax revenues. This is legislation that is key to stimulating the economy, at a time when we need the economy stimulated the most.

I want to close by pointing out the broad bipartisan support that this legislation has. We have 243 cosponsors. I want to especially congratulate the lead sponsors of this legislation, Mr. DELAHUNT of Massachusetts and the minority whip, Mr. BLUNT of Missouri. They have worked on this legislation for many years and pushed very hard to finally get us a floor vote. I am proud to join them today as a cosponsor and proud of their hard work.

I want to urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote yes on H.R. 3232. Let's be in favor of the Travel Promotion Act, and let's create some jobs at a time when we need them the most.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), a fellow Eva Cassidy fan.

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for yielding. I rise in strong support of this bill.

Myself and my colleague on the other side of the aisle, JON PORTER, formed the Congressional Tourism and Travel Caucus. JON PORTER is an outstanding cochair of that Tourism and Travel Caucus, and we have worked very closely with the authors, because this is a totally bipartisan bill, with Mr. DELAHUNT and Mr. BLUNT. It has been a work in progress for about the last 10 years, something the industry has really needed and America has really needed, particularly after 9/11, to try to expedite travelers coming to this country from especially those countries where we already have the Visa Waiver Program.

There is no taxpayer money in this. It is a congressionally created nonprofit corporation based here in Washington, D.C. It will have a 15-member directorate. They are not civil employees; they are not government employees. Those 15 members represent all aspects of American business, travel and rural areas as well, because, frankly, to boost the travel economy in this country boosts jobs in everybody's community. So this is one of those economic stimulus plans for America that has long been sought.

As you turn on the television and listen to these ads from other countries

trying to woo Americans to travel overseas to their countries, to Australia, New Zealand, Europe and so on, we are going to be able to compete with that kind of travel promotion and really do what I think is so wonderful about promoting America, not a particular commercial destination, but just America as a country and a place to visit and see the wonderful people here. We will live that American Dream, with people seeing what an incredible country and what wonderful people make up this country.

So I am very excited about the opportunity to really boost tourism in America, to boost world understanding of American culture and Americans, and really I think this is a big step towards global peace, and it is good for business in this country as well.

Madam Speaker, I urge a strong bipartisan vote for this bill.

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act of 2007. I want to thank my friend from Massachusetts, Congressman DELAHUNT, for his hard work on this bill, which would create American jobs, help boost our economy, and improve our image abroad through international goodwill.

The Travel Promotion Act would create a nonprofit entity funded by private companies to promote tourism in the United States, an industry which is vital to our economy and helps improve America's image abroad. For example, last year, Chicago alone welcomed an additional 1.15 million overseas visitors, an increase of 8 percent from 2006. Illinois saw tourism revenue from international visitors rise 15.6 percent to \$1.98 billion in 2007.

In addition to tourism being a key component of the American economy, the best way to improve our standing abroad is for people from other countries to come meet Americans and see our cities and sights.

To that end, the Travel Promotion Act can aid in our efforts to bring the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games to Chicago. Encouraging the world to visit Chicago for the Olympics would help showcase us as one of America's greatest cities, helping to build support for the 2016 Games in Chicago. Chicago was the 9th most popular U.S. city for overseas visitors last year, and the more people that visit our city and meet Chicagoans, the more goodwill we will build for our bid for Chicago to be the host city in 2016.

Madam Speaker, millions of Americans came away with a new understanding of China thanks to the Beijing Games this past summer. The Travel Promotion Act can help promote America to people all over the world, and as more people come to Chicago, I am confident that they will know what we know—Chicago is a first class city ready to host the world in 2016.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act of 2008. As I've stated this month during committee consideration of this bill, I believe this is a good bill that will allow our public and private sectors to cooperate on a strategy to encourage foreign visitors to come to the United States.

I also want to extend, once again, my thanks to my friend and colleague, BILL DELAHUNT, whose primary sponsorship and

work on behalf of this legislation has gotten us to where we are today. And to all the other cosponsors and supporters of this bill, let me also offer my appreciation.

This legislation is a response to the opportunity costs borne by the travel and tourism industries following reforms that Congress implemented in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Security was tightened at our ports of entry and we have made progress in better coordinating our national security apparatus to be aware of who is coming in and out of the country. Those reforms, though not always perfect, were important and we should be grateful that our country has been made safer as a result of them.

But the cost of those reforms has impacted some segments of our economy that were already directly impacted by the 9/11 attacks. Foreign visitors who, for a period of time, were unwilling to get on airplanes due to uncertainty about their safety after 9/11 are now unwilling to get on the same airplanes due to the bureaucratic obstacles to getting into the United States. Multiple agencies have heeded our call for greater security and barriers to entry, but the resulting layers of bureaucratic tape mean that legitimate visitors are often treated in a way none of us should be proud of, simply because they don't possess a United States passport. Millions of foreign travelers who want to visit our country for all the right reasons have received this message loud and clear: KEEP OUT. It isn't worth it to come here. The United States does not welcome you.

I've seen some estimates that show the results. Between 2004 and 2005, the United States experienced a decline of 10 percent in business travel. At the same time, Europe experienced an 8-percent increase. In 2005, we lost an estimated \$43 billion in visitor spending alone.

Increasing unwillingness by foreign visitors to come to the United States since 9/11 translates into a loss of \$94 billion in visitor spending; a loss of \$16 billion in tax revenue to Federal, state and local governments; and the loss of 200,000 American jobs.

Travel and tourism affects every congressional district in America. In my home district in Missouri, tourism in the city of Branson alone produced approximately \$1.8 billion for the local economy. Every one of my colleagues have places in their districts that foreign travelers benefit from visiting. We need to encourage that. Getting people to visit our country brings incredible benefits for things that are important to our country. Three specific things come to mind:

First, tourists spend and that helps local and regional economies. We all know our nation faces economic challenges today. Support for local businesses and the goods and services they offer is good for our tax base. Those revenues are benefits that our constituents don't have to pay in taxes themselves. And that's a good thing.

Second, tourism helps create jobs. Local businesses in support of tourist economies generate and sustain employment at all levels of the economy. At a time of economic challenge for many American families and their communities, these jobs are critical.

Finally, people who visit the United States tend to like Americans more. At a time when polling shows that fewer people understand Americans, it shouldn't surprise us that there

is waning support for our policies throughout the world. We know that when people visit us here in our country, they almost always like Americans more and are likely to consider American foreign policy more favorably than those who don't visit us. Members of Congress know better than anyone in the country that our best ambassadors are our constituents, when given the opportunity.

The Travel Promotion Act of 2008 is an effort to encourage all of those things, and reverse the dangerous notion that America is an unwelcoming place, not even worth the trouble of visiting. It creates a partnership that combines the resources and willpower of the private sector and the government to generate renewed interest in visiting America. We also took a hard look at what's already on the books and streamlined parts of the government that are supposed to be doing this work but aren't doing it effectively.

One area where I wish we'd spent some more time and effort was on updating the language relating to the Electronic System for Traveler Authorization (ESTA). When we originally crafted this bill, the ESTA had not yet been created, so our language included a reference to this on the condition it was authorized. The ESTA was authorized as part of the 9/11 bill that Congress passed last year. Unfortunately that legislation did not provide a mandate for the administration to collect the very fee that will provide the federal matching funds for the Corporation. I had hoped that as a result of the negotiations that got us here today, we would have found a way to create that mandate. I've been told that the Department of Homeland Security intends to create a fee in order to implement the ESTA in the near future. I would encourage the Department to do that and help get this program established.

The bill we have in front of us is an amended version of the bill that Mr. DELAHUNT and I introduced last year. I appreciate the hard work that Chairman DINGELL and Ranking Member BARTON have put into these amendments, as well as the work that Mr. RUSH and Mr. STEARNS put into the amendments that cleared the subcommittee last week. I think most of these changes enhance the bill and make it a better product.

I'd also like to thank Chairman BENNIE THOMPSON and Ranking Member PETER KING from the Homeland Security Committee, and Chairman JOHN CONYERS and Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH from the Judiciary Committee. Without the hard work of these members and their staffs, we wouldn't have this bill on the floor today.

I'm looking forward to passage of the Travel Promotion Act. I'm looking forward to working with the industry experts who eventually will serve on the board of the Corporation for Travel Promotion and with the Department of Commerce to develop a strategy to ensure our country is an attractive market for international travelers. And, of course, I'm looking forward to welcoming as many of those travelers as possible to Branson, Missouri.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I submit two letters for the RECORD regarding H.R. 3232.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, September 24, 2008.

Hon. JOHN D. DINGELL,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you regarding H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act of 2007, introduced by Mr. Delahunt on July 31, 2007, which upon introduction was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary and Homeland Security.

H.R. 3232 was marked up and ordered reported by the Committee on Energy and Commerce on September 23, 2008. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this bill before the House in an expeditious manner, and, accordingly, I will waive further consideration of this bill in Committee. However, agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as the Committee on Homeland Security waiving, altering, or otherwise affecting its jurisdiction over H.R. 3232.

Further, I request your support for the appointment of Committee on Homeland Security conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this or similar legislation. Finally, I request that a copy of this letter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 3232. I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COM-
MITTEE ON ENERGY AND COM-
MERCE,

Washington, DC, September 25, 2008.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3232, the Travel Promotion Act of 2008.

The letter expresses the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Homeland Security in the bill. The Committee on Energy and Commerce recognizes that your Committee has received a referral on H.R. 3232. I appreciate your decision to forgo a markup of the bill, and I agree with you that the decision does not in any way prejudice the Committee on Homeland Security with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives, including the appointment of conferees, on this bill or similar legislation in the future. If a House-Senate conference is convened on H.R. 3232, I would support a request by the Committee on Homeland Security for an appropriate number of conferees with respect to provisions within its jurisdiction.

I will include our letters in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor. I appreciate the collaboration between our committees in crafting H.R. 3232, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

JOHN D. DINGELL,
Chairman.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3232, the "Travel Promotion Act of 2008." This legislation is the bipartisan product of negotiations between three committees. I commend several of my colleagues who contributed to this bill's improvement. In particular, my good friend and the chairman of the Subcommittee on

Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, BOBBY RUSH, deserves recognition for his efforts. I also extend my personal thanks to the chairmen and ranking members of the Committees on Homeland Security and the Judiciary, Representatives THOMPSON, KING, CONYERS, and SMITH, respectively. Lastly, I offer my gratitude and congratulations to my friend from Massachusetts, Representative DELAHUNT, the distinguished Republican Whip, Representative BLUNT, and Representative LOPGREN of California.

The amendments made to H.R. 3232 by the Committee on Energy and Commerce in consultation with the other Committees have measurably strengthened the accountability standards to which the Corporation for Travel Promotion, which this bill charters, will be held. I support the goal of encouraging more foreign tourists traveling to the United States, and would urge my colleagues to adopt the "Travel Promotion Act of 2008."

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I yield back my time.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3232, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2851. An act to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that dependent students who take a medically necessary leave of absence do not lose health insurance coverage, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5057. An act to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1276. An act to facilitate the creation of methamphetamine precursor electronic log-book systems, and for other purposes.

S. 3296. An act to extend the authority of the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the Supreme Court Grounds and change the title of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice.