

Visit America Act



U.S. SENATOR for ALASKA
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The Visit America Act seeks to strengthen domestic tourism by creating a new role in the Department of Commerce, the Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism, to elevate the attention and coordination paid to the tourism industry. Further, the bill sets visitation goals, requires whole-of-government strategies to ensure the visitation goals are met, and interagency coordination to support U.S. tourism.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Visit America Act'

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

- a. To ensure the economic impacts of the travel and tourism industry is supported as a vital component of commerce and our national economy.
- b. To address decline in U.S. market-share of international travelers.
- c. To establish national goals for international visitation that include (1) recommendations to address visitation goals; (2) inter-agency coordination; (3) time lines for implementation of recommendations; (4) agency need assessments.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Sense of Congress establishing a Visitation Goal of 116 million annual international visitors to the U.S. by 2028.

SEC. 4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.

- a. There shall be in the Department of Commerce an Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism, who shall be appointed by the President, who—
 1. shall report directly to the Under Secretary for International Trade; and
 2. shall have a minimum of 5 years professional experience in tourism, travel, marketing, or related industries, and a minimum of 5 years of management experience.

SEC.5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

The responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism shall be as follows:

- (a) Visitation Goals:
 - a. Establish initial international visitation goal to be met by 2028.
 - b. Develop recommendations to achieve visitation goal.
 - c. Ensure public and private sector coordination with—
 - i. Interagency Policy Council
 1. Create or expand existing interagency policy coordination between: Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, State, Transportation, Labor for policy development and recommendations for utilizing:
 - ii. The National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO)
 - iii. The Brand USA program
 - iv. The U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (USTTAB)
 - v. Task Force on Travel and Tourism under Executive Order 13597.
 - vi. Travel industry partners including: Destination Marketing Organizations both public and private, travel and tourism suppliers.





- d. Timelines for implementation: short (<1 year), medium (1-2 years) long (2+ years)
- e. Agency needs assessment including, resources, required statutory or regulatory action, private sector engagement.

(b) Visa Adjudication

- a. In conjunction with State and DHS, set visa processing goals by visitation type, not to exceed 30 days.
 - i. Provide recommendations for regulatory and policy needs to meet goals that include technology, processing centers, and training.
 - ii. Develop a plan streamlining visa applications and adjudication.
- b. Explore pilot opportunities to integrate technology into visa adjudication process, such as video conferencing and biometrics.

(c) Domestic Travel

- a. Conduct a study to identify its strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and challenges to domestic tourism.
- b. Develop recommendations and goals to support domestic tourism.
- c. Engage public and private stakeholders to support domestic tourism.

(d) Workforce

- a. Coordination with the Department of Labor to provide timely and reliable workforce data regarding workforce and labor market needs.
- b. Work to improve data collection by Bureau of Labor Statistics in tourism industry.
- c. In conjunction with counterparts at the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State, the Assistant Secretary shall support stable access to international labor markets through the H-2B and J-1 visa programs.
 - i. Provide recommendations for policy enhancements and streamlining.

(e) Travel Export Promotion

- a. In conjunction with the U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service, work to promote travel exports abroad by:
 - i. Participating in and organizing meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions.
 - ii. Monitor visa adjudication.
 - iii. Among other uniquely American destinations, emphasizing rural and other destinations rich in cultural heritage tourism.

(f) Travel Security

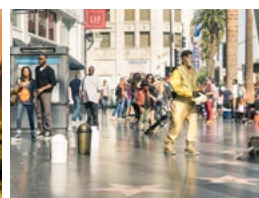
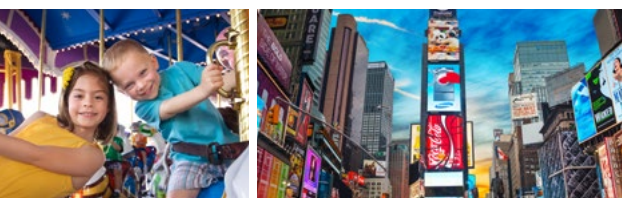
- a. Investigate and recommend utilization and expansion opportunities of existing security programs:
 - i. Visa Waiver Program
 - ii. Preclearance
 - iii. Trusted Traveler Programs
 - iv. Entry/Exit mandate

SEC.6. Requirements

- (a) Department of Commerce shall create a 10-year Travel and Tourism Strategy, in consultation with the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. The strategy shall include a report to Congress on feasibility of meeting 116 million annual international visitors to the U.S. by 2028, resource, and statutory needs.
- (b) Require Department of Commerce to coordinate a multi-agency strategy with State, DHS to identify impediments to reaching the goal and solutions to reaching it.

SEC.7. United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.

- (a) Provide a statutory authorization for the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.



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