

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3831

To authorize the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, to statutorily establish the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2020

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. KING) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To authorize the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, to statutorily establish the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and for other purposes.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

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

5 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

6 The purposes of this Act are—

1 (1) to support the travel and tourism industry,
2 which produces economic impacts that are vital our
3 national economy;

4 (2) to address the recent decline in the percent-
5 age of international travelers who visit the United
6 States; and

7 (3) to establish national goals for international
8 visitors to the United States, including—

9 (A) recommendations for achieving such
10 goals and timelines for implementing such rec-
11 ommendations;

12 (B) coordination between Federal and
13 State agencies;

14 (C) assessing the resources needed by each
15 Government agency to achieve such goals;

16 (D) setting national travel export goals;
17 and

18 (E) setting national domestic travel goals.

19 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

20 It is the sense of Congress that—

21 (1) the national goal for international visitors
22 referred to in section 2(3) should reach 116,000,000
23 per year by 2028;

1 (2) the national goal for travel exports referred
2 to in section 2(3)(D) should reach \$445,000,000,000
3 by 2028;

4 (3) the travel industry is an essential part of
5 the United States services exports with respect to
6 both business travel and leisure travel;

7 (4) the promotion of travel and visitation by
8 Brand USA is vital to increasing visitation and ar-
9 ticulating the visitation laws of the United States;
10 and

11 (5) there is an urgent need for a coordinated
12 travel and tourism industry response and strategy in
13 the event of unforeseen circumstances leading to a
14 decline in travel or tourism.

15 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

16 Section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered
17 3 of 1979 (93 Stat. 1382; 5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

18 (1) by striking “There shall be in the Depart-
19 ment two additional Assistant Secretaries” and in-
20 serting “(1) There shall be in the Department 3 ad-
21 ditional Assistant Secretaries, including the Assist-
22 ant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tour-
23 ism,”; and

24 (2) by adding at the end the following:

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

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

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

7 **SEC. 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY**
8 **OF COMMERCE FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

9 (a) VISITATION GOALS.—The Assistant Secretary of
10 Commerce for Travel and Tourism (referred to in this sec-
11 tion as the “Assistant Secretary”), appointed pursuant to
12 section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of
13 1979, as amended by section 4, shall—

14 (1) establish an annual goal for—

15 (A) the number of international visitors to
16 the United States, which shall reach
17 116,000,000 by 2028; and

18 (B) travel exports, which shall reach
19 \$445,000,000,000 by 2028;

20 (2) develop recommendations for achieving such
21 visitation goal;

22 (3) ensure coordination between—

23 (A) the Department of Commerce, the De-
24 partment of Homeland Security, the Depart-
25 ment of State, the Department of Transpor-

1 tation, the Department of Labor for policy de-
2 velopment and recommendations for utilizing:

3 (B) the National Travel and Tourism Of-
4 fice;

5 (C) Brand USA;

6 (D) the United States Travel and Tourism
7 Advisory Board;

8 (E) the Task Force on Travel and Tourism
9 established by Executive Order 13597 of Janu-
10 ary 19, 2012; and

11 (F) travel industry partners, including
12 public and private destination marketing orga-
13 nizations and travel and tourism suppliers;

14 (4) establish short-, medium-, and long-term
15 timelines for implementing the recommendations de-
16 veloped pursuant to paragraph (2); and

17 (5) conduct Federal agency needs assessments
18 to identify the resources, statutory or regulatory
19 changes, and private sector engagement needed to
20 achieve the annual visitation goals.

21 (b) VISA ADJUDICATION.—The Assistant Sec-
22 retary—

23 (1) in coordination with the Secretary of State
24 and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall pro-

1 vide support for improving visitor visa processing
2 with respect to—

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

5 (B) recommending regulatory and policy
6 changes needed to meet such visa processing
7 goals, including technology, processing centers,
8 and training; and

9 (C) a plan for streamlining visa applica-
10 tions and adjudications, including application
11 design and data collection procedures; and

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

16 (c) DOMESTIC TRAVEL.—The Assistant Secretary
17 shall—

18 (1) conduct a study to identify domestic com-
19 petitiveness with respect to—

20 (A) the strengths and weaknesses of the
21 domestic travel industry; and

22 (B) the external opportunities and chal-
23 lenges to domestic tourism;

1 (2) develop recommendations and goals to sup-
2 port domestic tourism, separated by business and
3 leisure; and

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

6 (d) WORKFORCE.—The Assistant Secretary—

7 (1) in coordination with the Secretary of Labor,
8 shall provide timely and reliable workforce data re-
9 garding workforce and labor market needs;

10 (2) shall work to improve tourism industry data
11 collection by the Bureau of Economic Analysis; and

12 (3) shall provide recommendations for policy en-
13 hancements and streamlining.

14 (e) TRAVEL EXPORT PROMOTION.—The Assistant
15 Secretary, in coordination with the Director General of the
16 United States and Foreign Commercial Service, shall work
17 to promote and facilitate travel exports abroad and ensure
18 competitiveness by—

19 (1) participating in and organizing meetings,
20 incentives, conferences, and exhibitions;

21 (2) monitor visa adjudications;

22 (3) emphasizing rural and other destinations
23 rich in cultural heritage or ecological tourism,
24 among other uniquely American destinations; and

1 (4) promoting sports and recreation events and
2 activities.

3 (f) TRAVEL SECURITY.—The Assistant Secretary
4 shall investigate and provide recommendations regarding
5 utilizing and expanding existing security programs to bet-
6 ter meet the needs of the United States travel and tourism
7 industry, including—

8 (1) the Visa Waiver Program authorized under
9 section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act
10 (8 U.S.C. 1187);

11 (2) preclearance operations;

12 (3) the Trusted Traveler Program; and

13 (4) the biometric entry-exit control system re-
14 quired under section 110 of the Illegal Immigration
15 Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996
16 (division C of Public Law 104–208; 8 U.S.C. 1221
17 note).

18 (g) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—

19 (1) INITIAL RECOVERY STRATEGY.—Not later
20 than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this
21 Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with
22 the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory
23 Board and travel industry partners, shall develop
24 and implement a COVID–19 pandemic recovery
25 strategy to assist in the United States travel and

1 tourism industry to quickly recover from the travel
2 restrictions necessitated by the pandemic.

3 (2) FUTURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.—After
4 assisting in the implementation of the strategy de-
5 veloped pursuant to paragraph (1), the Assistant
6 Secretary, in consultation with the entities referred
7 to in such paragraph, shall develop additional recov-
8 ery strategies for the travel and tourism industry in
9 anticipation of other unforeseen catastrophic events
10 that would significantly affect the travel and tourism
11 industry, such as hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, tor-
12 nadoes, or pandemics.

13 (h) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

14 (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The Assistant
15 Secretary shall produce an annual forecasting report
16 on the travel and tourism industry, which shall in-
17 clude current and anticipated—

18 (A) domestic employment needs;

19 (B) international inbound volume and
20 spending, taking into account the lasting effects
21 of the COVID–19 pandemic and the impact of
22 the recovery strategy implemented pursuant to
23 subsection (g)(1);

1 (C) domestic volume and spending, includ-
2 ing Federal and State public land travel and
3 tourism data.

4 (2) BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—The Di-
5 rector of the Bureau of Economic Analysis should
6 update the Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts
7 quarterly, including—

8 (A) State level travel and tourism export
9 data;

10 (B) travel and tourism workforce data for
11 full-time and part-time employment; and

12 (C) Federal and State public lands visita-
13 tion and spending data.

14 (3) NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OF-
15 FICE.—The Director of the National Travel and
16 Tourism Office shall—

17 (A) report international arrival and spend-
18 ing data on a regular monthly schedule; and

19 (B) shall include questions in the Survey
20 of International Air Travelers regarding wait-
21 times, visits to public lands, and State data, to
22 the extent applicable.

23 **SEC. 6. TRAVEL AND TOURISM STRATEGY.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce, in
25 consultation with the United States Travel and Tourism

1 Advisory Board, shall develop and submit to Congress a
 2 10-year travel and tourism strategy, which shall include—

3 (1) the feasibility of achieving—

4 (A) 116,000,000 annual international visi-
 5 tors to the United States by 2028; and

6 (B) \$445,000,000,000 in travel exports by
 7 2028;

8 (2) the resources needed to achieve the goals
 9 set forth in paragraph (1); and

10 (3) recommendations for statutory or regulatory
 11 changes that would be necessary to achieve such
 12 goals.

13 (b) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—The Secretary
 14 of Commerce shall coordinate an interagency strategy with
 15 the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Se-
 16 curity for—

17 (1) identify impediments to reaching the goals
 18 referred to in subsection (a)(1); and

19 (2) recommends solutions for overcoming such
 20 impediments.

21 **SEC. 7. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
 22 **BOARD.**

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

1 (1) by amending the section heading to read as
 2 follows: “**UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM**
 3 **ADVISORY BOARD; ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR**
 4 **PROMOTION OF TOURIST TRAVEL**”; and

5 (2) by striking “The Secretary of Commerce is
 6 authorized” and inserting the following:

7 “(a) UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVI-
 8 SORY BOARD.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the
 10 United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
 11 (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Board’), which
 12 shall be composed of not more than 32 members,
 13 who shall be appointed by the Secretary of Com-
 14 merce for 2-year terms from among companies and
 15 organizations in the travel and tourism industry.

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

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

23 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The Board shall comply
 24 with its Charter, as established in 2003, including—

1 “(A) serving as the advisory body to the
2 Secretary of Commerce on matters relating to
3 the travel and tourism industry in the United
4 States;

5 “(B) advising the Secretary of Commerce
6 on government policies and programs that af-
7 fect the United States travel and tourism indus-
8 try;

9 “(C) offering counsel on current and
10 emerging issues;

11 “(D) providing a forum for discussing and
12 proposing solutions to problems related to the
13 travel and tourism industry; and

14 “(E) examining the domestic travel and
15 tourism industry as an economic engine.

16 “(5) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—The Board shall
17 assist the Assistant Secretary in the development
18 and implementation of the COVID–19 pandemic re-
19 covery strategy required under section 5(g)(1) of the
20 Visit America Act.

21 “(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF
22 TOURIST TRAVEL.—The Secretary of Commerce is au-
23 thorized”.

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