

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000  
202/463-5310

October 20, 2011

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schumer and Lee:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, supports the introduction of the "Visa Improvements to Stimulate International Tourism to the United States of America Act (VISIT USA Act)," which would address key barriers in the visa processing system and help stimulate international business and leisure travel to the United States.

Travel and tourism is a small-business-centered sector that accounts for more than \$700 billion in revenues and 7.4 million American jobs. When business visitors travel to the U.S. to buy products or participate in conferences, training, and trade shows, they strengthen America's role as the center of innovation and global commerce. By increasing efficiency in the visa processing system and reversing the perception that the U.S. does not welcome international travelers, the U.S. could restore its share of the travel market to its 2000 level of 17 percent and create an additional 1.3 million jobs by 2020.

To increase international travel to the U.S. and help create American jobs, this bill would:

- Allow the State Department to offer "premium processing" for visitors who require expedited visa processing. It would allow the State Department to charge a fee for this service and use the revenue from the fee to fund the increased efficiency in visa processing systems in Brazil, China, and India, procure the technology required to conduct videoconferencing interviews, and create mobile interview units to process visa applications and conduct visa interviews in cities with large populations that do not have a U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Give the State Department the ability to incentivize travelers who plan ahead by giving the Department the flexibility to reduce visa application and issuance fees in specific countries during times when the demand for visitor visas in these countries is low.
- Work to address one of the key barriers for travelers from China by extending the validity of visitor visas issued to Chinese nationals from one year to five years and allowing for multiple entries under such visas.

- Provide necessary updates to the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program currently provides visa-free travel for business and leisure visitors from 36 countries, and the updated requirements contained in this legislation would allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to add additional program countries after they have successfully met the necessary security requirements.

The Chamber thanks you for introducing this bill and looks forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

R. Bruce Josten