

105TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4631

To create employment opportunities and to promote economic growth in the United States by establishing a public-private partnership between the United States travel and tourism industry and every level of government to work to make the United States the premiere travel and tourism destination in the world, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 25, 1998

Mr. FARR of California (for himself and Mr. FOLEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

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## A BILL

To create employment opportunities and to promote economic growth in the United States by establishing a public-private partnership between the United States travel and tourism industry and every level of government to work to make the United States the premiere travel and tourism destination in the world, 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 “Value in Supporting  
5 International Tourism in the United States Act of 1998”  
6 or “Visit USA Act”.

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1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) the travel and tourism industry, as one of  
4 the Nation’s largest employers, has made a substan-  
5 tial contribution to the health of the Nation’s econ-  
6 omy in that:

7 (A) the industry directly employs  
8 7,000,000 Americans, throughout every region  
9 of the country, heavily concentrated among  
10 small businesses, and indirectly employs an ad-  
11 ditional 9,200,000 Americans, for a total of  
12 16,200,000 jobs;

13 (B) the industry ranks as the first, second,  
14 or third largest employer in 32 States and the  
15 District of Columbia, generating a total  
16 tourism-related annual payroll of  
17 \$127,900,000,000;

18 (C) the industry has become the Nation’s  
19 third largest retail sales industry, generating a  
20 total of \$489,000,000,000 each year in total ex-  
21 penditures; and

22 (D) in 1977 the industry generated  
23 \$71,700,000,000 in tax revenues for Federal,  
24 State, and local governments;

25 (2) through an effective public-private partner-  
26 ship, Federal, State, and local governments and the

1 travel and tourism industry can successfully market  
2 the United States as the premiere international tour-  
3 ist destination in the world;

4 (3) the private sector, States, and cities cur-  
5 rently spend more than \$1,000,000,000 annually to  
6 promote particular destinations within the United  
7 States to international visitors;

8 (4) the more than \$98,000,000,000 spent by  
9 more than 54,000,000 foreign visitors in the United  
10 States in 1997 generated a trade surplus in the  
11 service sector of more than \$26,000,000,000;

12 (5) 100 nations around the world spend hun-  
13 dreds of millions of dollars annually to promote the  
14 visits of international tourists to their countries,  
15 whereas the United States does not expend Federal  
16 funds for this purpose;

17 (6) the United States will miss a major market-  
18 ing opportunity if it fails to aggressively compete for  
19 an increased share of international tourism expendi-  
20 tures;

21 (7) in 1997, 17,900,000 more people visited  
22 France than the United States;

23 (8) 92 percent of the tourism industry is com-  
24 posed of small- and medium-sized businesses;

1           (9) a well-funded, well-coordinated international  
2           marketing effort—developed and implemented by a  
3           joint public-private sector effort—would help small  
4           and large businesses, as well as State and local gov-  
5           ernments, share in the projected growth of the inter-  
6           national travel and tourism market in the 21st cen-  
7           tury;

8           (10) Congress can increase the opportunities  
9           for attracting international visitors and enhancing  
10          their stay in the United States by—

11                 (A) continuing the successful visa waiver  
12                 pilot program;

13                 (B) improving international signage at air-  
14                 ports, seaports, land border crossings, high-  
15                 ways, and bus, train, and other public transit  
16                 stations in the United States;

17                 (C) increasing the availability of multi-  
18                 lingual tourist information; and

19                 (D) creating a toll-free, private sector op-  
20                 erated, emergency telephone number, staffed by  
21                 multilingual operators, to provide assistance to  
22                 international tourists;

23          (11) by establishing a satellite system of ac-  
24          counting for travel and tourism, the Secretary of  
25          Commerce could provide Congress and the President

1 with objective, thorough data that would help policy-  
2 makers more accurately gauge the size and scope of  
3 the domestic travel and tourism industry and its sig-  
4 nificant impact on the health of the Nation's econ-  
5 omy; and

6 (12) having established the United States Na-  
7 tional Tourism Organization under the United  
8 States National Tourism Organization Act of 1996  
9 (22 U.S.C. 2141 et seq.) to increase the United  
10 States share of the international tourism market by  
11 developing a national travel and tourism strategy,  
12 Congress should support a long-term marketing ef-  
13 fort and other important regulatory reform initia-  
14 tives to promote increased international travel to the  
15 United States.

16 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to facili-  
17 tate international visitors' travel in the United States and  
18 promote an international marketing program to make the  
19 United States the premiere travel destination in the world.

20 **TITLE I—INTERNATIONAL**  
21 **VISITOR INITIATIVES**

22 **SEC. 101. INTERNATIONAL VISITOR ASSISTANCE TASK**  
23 **FORCE.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 9 months after  
25 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Com-

1 merce shall establish an Intergovernmental Task Force for  
2 International Visitor Assistance (hereafter in this section  
3 referred to as the “Task Force”).

4 (b) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall examine—

5 (1) signage at facilities in the United States, in-  
6 cluding airports, seaports, land border crossings,  
7 highways, and bus, train, and other public transit  
8 stations, and shall identify existing inadequacies and  
9 suggest solutions for such inadequacies, such as the  
10 adoption of uniform standards on international sign-  
11 age for use throughout the United States in order  
12 to facilitate international visitors’ travel in the  
13 United States;

14 (2) the availability of multilingual travel and  
15 tourism information and means of disseminating, at  
16 no or minimal cost to the Government, such infor-  
17 mation; and

18 (3) the feasibility of establishing a toll-free, pri-  
19 vate sector operated telephone number, staffed by  
20 multilingual operators, to provide assistance to inter-  
21 national tourists coping with an emergency.

22 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force shall be com-  
23 posed of the following members:

24 (1) The Secretary of Commerce.

25 (2) The Secretary of State.

1           (3) The Secretary of Transportation.

2           (4) The Chair of the Board of Directors of the  
3 United States National Tourism Organization.

4           (5) 1 representative from each of 4 organiza-  
5 tions serving on the United States National Tourism  
6 Organization Board of Directors, chosen by consen-  
7 sus of the Board.

8           (6) Such other representatives of other Federal  
9 agencies and private sector entities as may be deter-  
10 mined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task  
11 Force by the Chairman.

12       (d) CHAIRMAN.—The Secretary of Commerce shall be  
13 Chairman of the Task Force. The Task Force shall meet  
14 at least twice each year. Each member of the Task Force  
15 shall furnish necessary assistance to the Task Force.

16       (e) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the  
17 date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the  
18 Task Force shall submit to the President and to Congress  
19 a report on the results of the review under subsection (b),  
20 including proposed amendments to existing laws or regula-  
21 tions as may be appropriate to implement such rec-  
22 ommendations.

1 **SEC. 102. TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY SATELLITE SYS-**  
2 **TEM OF ACCOUNTING.**

3 The Secretary of Commerce shall complete, as soon  
4 as may be practicable, a satellite system of accounting for  
5 the travel and tourism industry which will highlight the  
6 amounts spent for travel and tourism.

7 **TITLE II—INTERNATIONAL**  
8 **MARKETING PROGRAM**

9 **SEC. 201. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

10 (a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—Subject to subsection (b),  
11 there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may  
12 be necessary for the purpose of funding international pro-  
13 motional activities by the United States National Tourism  
14 Organization to help brand, position, and promote the  
15 United States as the premiere travel and tourism destina-  
16 tion in the world.

17 (b) **RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.**—None of the  
18 funds appropriated under subsection (a) may be—

19 (1) disbursed until matching funds are commit-  
20 ted by the private sector—for each dollar collected  
21 from the private sector, \$1 in appropriated funds  
22 may be disbursed;

23 (2) used for the general and administrative ex-  
24 penses of operating the United States National  
25 Tourism Organization;



1           (3) used for purposes other than researching  
2           and marketing designed to promote the United  
3           States as the premiere travel and tourism destina-  
4           tion in the world.

5           The general and administrative expenses of the Organiza-  
6           tion shall be borne by the private sector through such  
7           means as the Board of Directors of the Organization shall  
8           determine.

9           (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than March  
10          30 of each year in which funds are made available under  
11          subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Commit-  
12          tee on Commerce of the House of Representatives and the  
13          Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of  
14          the Senate a detailed report setting forth—

15                 (1) an analysis of the impact of international  
16                 tourism on the United States economy, including, as  
17                 specifically as practicable, changes in the United  
18                 States market share of international tourism in gen-  
19                 eral and as measured against specific countries and  
20                 regions;

21                 (2) an analysis of the impact of expenditures  
22                 made pursuant to this section on international tour-  
23                 ism on the United States trade balance;

1           (3) an analysis of other relevant economic im-  
2           pacts as a result of expenditures made pursuant to  
3           this section; and

4           (4) the expenditure of appropriated funds.

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