

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2412

To create employment opportunities and to promote economic growth 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.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 1998

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

A BILL

To create employment opportunities and to promote economic growth 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Value in Supporting
3 International Tourism in the United States Act of 1998”
4 or the “Visit USA Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

7 (1) through an effective public-private partner-
8 ship, Federal, State, and local governments and the
9 travel and tourism industry can successfully market
10 the United States as the premiere international tour-
11 ist destination in the world;

12 (2) in 1997, the travel and tourism industry
13 made a substantial contribution to the health of the
14 Nation’s economy, as follows:

15 (A) The industry is one of the Nation’s
16 largest employers, directly employing 7,000,000
17 Americans, throughout every region of the
18 country, heavily concentrated among small busi-
19 nesses, and indirectly employing an additional
20 9,200,000 Americans, for a total of 16,200,000
21 jobs.

22 (B) The industry ranks as the first, sec-
23 ond, or third largest employer in 32 States and
24 the District of Columbia, generating a total
25 tourism-related annual payroll of
26 \$127,900,000,000.

1 (C) The industry has become the Nation's
2 third-largest retail sales industry, generating a
3 total of \$489,000,000,000 in total expenditures.

4 (D) The industry generated
5 \$71,700,000,000 in tax revenues for Federal,
6 State, and local governments;

7 (3) the more than \$98,000,000,000 spent by
8 foreign visitors in the United States in 1997 gen-
9 erated a trade services surplus of more than
10 \$26,000,000,000;

11 (4) the private sector, States, and cities cur-
12 rently spend more than \$1,000,000,000 annually to
13 promote particular destinations within the United
14 States to international visitors;

15 (5) because other nations are spending hun-
16 dreds of millions of dollars annually to promote the
17 visits of international tourists to their countries, the
18 United States will miss a major marketing oppor-
19 tunity if it fails to aggressively compete for an in-
20 creased share of international tourism expenditures
21 as they continue to increase over the next decade;

22 (6) a well-funded, well-coordinated international
23 marketing effort—combined with additional public
24 and private sector efforts—would help small and
25 large businesses, as well as State and local govern-

1 ments, share in the anticipated phenomenal growth
2 of the international travel and tourism market in the
3 21st century;

4 (7) by making permanent the successful visa
5 waiver pilot program, Congress can facilitate the in-
6 creased flow of international visitors to the United
7 States;

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

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

15 (B) increasing the availability of multi-
16 lingual tourist information; and

17 (C) creating a toll-free, private-sector oper-
18 ated, telephone number, staffed by multilingual
19 operators, to provide assistance to international
20 tourists coping with an emergency;

21 (9) by establishing a satellite system of ac-
22 counting for travel and tourism, the Secretary of
23 Commerce could provide Congress and the President
24 with objective, thorough data that would help policy-
25 makers more accurately gauge the size and scope of

1 the domestic travel and tourism industry and its sig-
2 nificant impact on the health of the Nation's econ-
3 omy; and

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

14 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to pro-
15 vide international visitor initiatives and an international
16 marketing program to enable the United States travel and
17 tourism industry and every level of government to benefit
18 from a successful effort to make the United States the
19 premiere travel destination in the world.

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

22 **SEC. 102. 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, of such infor-
17 mation; and

18 (3) facilitating the establishment of a toll-free,
19 private-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) Such other representatives of other Federal
5 agencies and private-sector entities as may be deter-
6 mined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task
7 Force by the Chairman.

8 (d) CHAIRMAN.—The Secretary of Commerce shall be
9 Chairman of the Task Force. The Task Force shall meet
10 at least twice each year. Each member of the Task Force
11 shall furnish necessary assistance to the Task Force.

12 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the
13 date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the
14 Task Force shall submit to the President and to Congress
15 a report on the results of the review, including proposed
16 amendments to existing laws or regulations as may be ap-
17 propriate to implement such recommendations.

18 **SEC. 103. TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY SATELLITE SYS-**

19 **TEM OF ACCOUNTING.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall
21 complete, as soon as may be practicable, a satellite system
22 of accounting for the travel and tourism industry.

23 (b) FUNDING.—To the extent any costs or expendi-
24 tures are incurred under this section, they shall be covered

1 to the extent funds are available to the Department of
2 Commerce for such purpose.

3 **TITLE II—INTERNATIONAL**
4 **MARKETING PROGRAM**

5 **SEC. 201. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

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

13 (b) **RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS.**—None of the
14 funds appropriated under subsection (a) may be used for
15 purposes other than marketing, research, outreach, or any
16 other activity designed to promote the United States as
17 the premiere travel and tourism destination in the world,
18 except that the general and administrative expenses of op-
19 erating the United States National Tourism Organization
20 shall be borne by the private sector through such means
21 as the Board of Directors of the Organization shall deter-
22 mine.

23 (c) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than March
24 30 of each year in which funds are made available under
25 subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Committee

1 on Commerce of the House of Representatives and the
2 Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of
3 the Senate a detailed report setting forth—

4 (1) the manner in which appropriated funds
5 were expended;

6 (2) changes in the United States market share
7 of international tourism in general and as measured
8 against specific countries and regions;

9 (3) an analysis of the impact of international
10 tourism on the United States economy, including, as
11 specifically as practicable, an analysis of the impact
12 of expenditures made pursuant to this section;

13 (4) an analysis of the impact of international
14 tourism on the United States trade balance and, as
15 specifically as practicable, an analysis of the impact
16 on the trade balance of expenditures made pursuant
17 to this section; and

18 (5) an analysis of other relevant economic im-
19 pacts as a result of expenditures made pursuant to
20 this section.

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