

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 775

To streamline the R–1 religious worker visa petition process.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 30, 2017

Mr. HATCH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

---

## A BILL

To streamline the R–1 religious worker visa petition process.

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 “Religious Worker Visa  
5 Improvement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. R–1 RELIGIOUS WORKER VISA PETITIONS.**

7 Section 214 of the Immigration and Nationality Act  
8 (8 U.S.C. 1184) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
9 lowing:

10 “(s) VISAS OF NONIMMIGRANTS DESCRIBED IN SEC-  
11 TION 101(a)(15)(R).—

1           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
2 graph (2), a consular officer may not issue a visa  
3 and the Secretary of Homeland Security may not  
4 grant status to any alien under section  
5 101(a)(15)(R) until the Secretary has approved a  
6 petition filed on behalf of such alien.

7           “(2) BLANKET PETITION AUTHORIZED.—Not-  
8 withstanding paragraph (1), a petitioner who has  
9 satisfied the requirements under paragraph (3) may  
10 file a blanket petition, in lieu of individual petitions,  
11 on behalf of aliens who meet the eligibility require-  
12 ments under paragraph (4).

13           “(3) PETITIONER REQUIREMENTS.—A peti-  
14 tioner satisfies the requirements under this para-  
15 graph if—

16           “(A) the petitioner has an established pro-  
17 gram for temporary, uncompensated missionary  
18 work in the United States that is part of a  
19 broader international missionary work program;

20           “(B) participation in the missionary work  
21 described in subparagraph (A) is an established  
22 element of religious development in the peti-  
23 tioner’s religious denomination;

1           “(C) the petitioner provides formal train-  
2           ing to its missionaries that is incidental to their  
3           missionary service;

4           “(D) the petitioner has established a finan-  
5           cial support system that reasonably ensures  
6           that its missionaries will not become public  
7           charges during their missionary service; and

8           “(E) at least 1,000 individual petitions for  
9           nonimmigrant religious workers previously filed  
10          by the petitioner under section 101(a)(15)(R)  
11          have been approved by the Secretary of Home-  
12          land Security.

13          “(4) ELIGIBILITY FOR INCLUSION IN BLANKET  
14          PETITION.—An alien meets the requirements under  
15          this paragraph if the alien—

16                 “(A) is described in section 101(a)(15)(R);

17                 “(B) has been accepted into a missionary  
18                 program described in paragraph (3)(A); and

19                 “(C) will perform missionary work at a lo-  
20                 cation listed in the blanket-petition approval no-  
21                 tice.

22          “(5) LIMITATION.—

23                 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of  
24                 Homeland Security may only include, in its ap-  
25                 proval of a blanket petition, locations of mis-

1           sionary service for which the Secretary has pre-  
2           viously conducted a site inspection in connection  
3           with an individual petition for a religious work-  
4           er.

5           “(B) DEFINED TERM.—In this paragraph,  
6           the term ‘location of missionary service’ means  
7           a specific worksite or a geographic area with  
8           specific boundaries. If the location of mis-  
9           sionary service is a geographical area with spe-  
10          cific boundaries, the location shall include a  
11          head office or facility that can be reasonably  
12          subject to a site inspection.

13          “(6) LIST OF AUTHORIZED LOCATIONS OF MIS-  
14          SIONARY SERVICE.—

15          “(A) NOTICE.—When the Secretary of  
16          Homeland Security approves a blanket petition  
17          filed under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall  
18          issue a notice to the petitioner containing a list  
19          of the locations of missionary service authorized  
20          under the blanket petition. Such approval shall  
21          remain valid unless revoked by the Secretary of  
22          Homeland Security for good cause shown.

23          “(B) AMENDMENT.—A petitioner under  
24          this subsection may file a petition at any time  
25          seeking to amend the list of locations of mis-

1           sionary service that were previously author-  
2           ized.”.

○