

Union Calendar No. 382

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6965

[Report No. 117-508, Part I]

To promote travel and tourism in the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2022

Ms. TITUS (for herself, Mr. CASE, and Mr. YOUNG) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

Additional sponsors: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. PHILLIPS, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, and Mr. SOTO

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

Reported from the Committee on Energy and Commerce with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

Committees on Foreign Affairs and the Judiciary discharged; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 7, 2022]

A BILL

To promote travel and tourism in the United States, 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. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

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

8 *(1) by striking “There shall be in the Depart-*
 9 *ment two additional Assistant Secretaries” and in-*
 10 *serting “(1) There shall be in the Department 3 addi-*
 11 *tional Assistant Secretaries, including the Assistant*
 12 *Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism,”;*
 13 *and*

14 *(2) by adding at the end the following:*

15 *“(2) The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel*
 16 *and Tourism shall—*

17 *“(A) be appointed by the President, subject to the*
 18 *advice and consent of the Senate; and*

19 *“(B) report directly to the Under Secretary for*
 20 *International Trade.”.*

21 **SEC. 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY**
 22 **OF COMMERCE FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

23 *(a) VISITATION GOALS.—The Assistant Secretary of*
 24 *Commerce for Travel and Tourism (referred to in this sec-*
 25 *tion as the “Assistant Secretary”), appointed pursuant to*

1 *section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of*
2 *1979, as amended by section 2, shall—*

3 *(1) establish an annual visitation goal, con-*
4 *sistent with the goals of the travel and tourism strat-*
5 *egy developed pursuant to section 4(1), for—*

6 *(A) the number of international visitors to*
7 *the United States; and*

8 *(B) the value of travel and tourism com-*
9 *merce;*

10 *(2) develop recommendations for achieving the*
11 *annual goals established pursuant to paragraph (1);*

12 *(3) ensure that travel and tourism policy is de-*
13 *veloped in consultation with—*

14 *(A) the Tourism Policy Council;*

15 *(B) the Secretary of Homeland Security;*

16 *(C) the National Travel and Tourism Of-*
17 *fice;*

18 *(D) Brand USA;*

19 *(E) the United States Travel and Tourism*
20 *Advisory Board; and*

21 *(F) travel industry partners, including pub-*
22 *lic and private destination marketing organiza-*
23 *tions, travel and tourism suppliers, and labor*
24 *representatives from these industries;*

1 (4) *establish short-, medium-, and long-term*
2 *timelines for implementing the recommendations de-*
3 *veloped pursuant to paragraph (2);*

4 (5) *conduct Federal agency needs assessments, in*
5 *consultation with the Office of Management and*
6 *Budget, to identify the resources, statutory or regu-*
7 *latory changes, and private sector engagement needed*
8 *to achieve the annual visitation goals; and*

9 (6) *provide assessments and recommendations*
10 *to—*

11 (A) *the Committee on Commerce, Science,*
12 *and Transportation of the Senate;*

13 (B) *the Committee on Energy and Com-*
14 *merce of the House of Representatives; and*

15 (C) *the public through a publicly accessible*
16 *website.*

17 (b) *VISA ADJUDICATION.—The Assistant Secretary, in*
18 *consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary*
19 *of Homeland Security, shall—*

20 (1) *explore strategies for improving visitor visa*
21 *processing with respect to—*

22 (A) *the maximum time for processing visas,*
23 *by visitation type;*

24 (B) *regulatory and policy changes needed to*
25 *meet the visa processing goals referred to in sub-*

1 *paragraph (A), including changes regarding*
2 *technology, processing centers, and training; and*

3 *(C) streamlining visa applications and ad-*
4 *judications, including application design and*
5 *data collection procedures; and*

6 *(2) explore opportunities to establish pilot pro-*
7 *grams to integrate technology into the visitor visa ad-*
8 *judication process, including video conferencing and*
9 *biometrics.*

10 *(c) DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.—The Assistant*
11 *Secretary, to the extent feasible, shall—*

12 *(1) evaluate, on an ongoing basis, domestic pol-*
13 *icy options for supporting competitiveness with re-*
14 *spect to the strengths, weaknesses, and growth of the*
15 *domestic travel industry;*

16 *(2) develop recommendations and goals to sup-*
17 *port and enhance domestic tourism, separated by*
18 *business and leisure; and*

19 *(3) engage public and private stakeholders to*
20 *support domestic tourism.*

21 *(d) WORKFORCE.—The Assistant Secretary shall—*

22 *(1) consult with the Secretary of Labor to de-*
23 *velop strategies and best practices for improving the*
24 *timeliness and reliability of travel and tourism work-*
25 *force data;*

1 (2) *work with the Secretary of Labor and the*
 2 *Bureau of Economic Analysis to improve travel and*
 3 *tourism industry data; and*

4 (3) *provide recommendations for policy enhance-*
 5 *ments and efficiencies.*

6 (e) *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRAVEL FACILITA-*
 7 *TION.—The Assistant Secretary, in coordination with rel-*
 8 *evant Federal agencies, shall work to increase and facilitate*
 9 *international business travel to the United States and en-*
 10 *sure competitiveness by engaging in, at a minimum—*

11 (1) *facilitating large meetings, incentives, con-*
 12 *ferences, and exhibitions to be hosted in the United*
 13 *States;*

14 (2) *emphasizing rural and other destinations*
 15 *rich in cultural heritage or ecological tourism, among*
 16 *other uniquely American destinations, as locations for*
 17 *hosting international meetings, incentives, con-*
 18 *ferences, and exhibitions in the United States; and*

19 (3) *facilitating sports and recreation events and*
 20 *activities, which shall be hosted in the United States.*

21 (f) *RECOVERY STRATEGY.—*

22 (1) *INITIAL RECOVERY STRATEGY.—Not later*
 23 *than 1 year after amounts are appropriated to ac-*
 24 *complish the purposes of this section, the Assistant*
 25 *Secretary, in consultation with public and private*

1 *stakeholders identified in subsection (a)(3) and public*
2 *health officials, shall develop and implement a*
3 *COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy*
4 *to assist the United States travel and tourism indus-*
5 *try to quickly recover from the pandemic.*

6 *(2) FUTURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.—After as-*
7 *sisting in the implementation of the strategy devel-*
8 *oped pursuant to paragraph (1), the Assistant Sec-*
9 *retary, in consultation with appropriate public and*
10 *private stakeholders, shall develop additional recovery*
11 *strategies for the travel and tourism industry in an-*
12 *ticipation of other unforeseen catastrophic events that*
13 *would significantly affect the travel and tourism in-*
14 *dustry, such as hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, torna-*
15 *does, terrorist attacks, and pandemics.*

16 *(3) COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.—In developing the*
17 *COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strategy*
18 *under paragraph (1) and additional recovery strate-*
19 *gies for the travel and tourism industry under para-*
20 *graph (2), the Assistant Secretary shall conduct cost-*
21 *benefit analyses that take into account the health and*
22 *economic effects of public health mitigation measures*
23 *on the travel and tourism industry.*

24 *(g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—*

1 (1) *ASSISTANT SECRETARY.*—*The Assistant Sec-*
2 *retary shall produce an annual forecasting report on*
3 *the travel and tourism industry, to the extent feasible,*
4 *which shall include current and anticipated—*

5 *(A) domestic employment needs;*

6 *(B) international inbound volume and*
7 *spending, taking into account the lasting effects*
8 *of the COVID–19 public health emergency and*
9 *the impact of the recovery strategy implemented*
10 *pursuant to subsection (f)(1); and*

11 *(C) domestic volume and spending, includ-*
12 *ing Federal and State public land travel and*
13 *tourism data.*

14 (2) *BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.*—*The Di-*
15 *rector of the Bureau of Economic Analysis should an-*
16 *nually update, to the extent feasible, the Travel and*
17 *Tourism Satellite Accounts, including—*

18 *(A) State level travel and tourism spending*
19 *data;*

20 *(B) travel and tourism workforce data for*
21 *full-time and part-time employment; and*

22 *(C) Federal and State public lands outdoor*
23 *recreational activity and tourism spending data.*

1 (3) *NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OFFICE.*—
2 *The Director of the National Travel and Tourism Of-*
3 *fice—*

4 (A) *in partnership with the Bureau of Eco-*
5 *nomic Analysis, shall report international ar-*
6 *rival and spending data on a regular monthly*
7 *schedule, which shall be made available to the*
8 *Travel and Tourism Advisory Board and to the*
9 *public through a publicly available website; and*
10 (B) *shall include questions in the Survey of*
11 *International Air Travelers regarding wait-*
12 *times, visits to public lands, and State data, to*
13 *the extent applicable.*

14 **SEC. 4. TRAVEL AND TOURISM STRATEGY.**

15 *Not less frequently than once every 10 years, the Sec-*
16 *retary of Commerce, in consultation with the United States*
17 *Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, the Tourism Policy*
18 *Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall de-*
19 *velop and submit to Congress a 10-year travel and tourism*
20 *strategy, which shall include—*

21 (1) *the establishment of goals with respect to the*
22 *number of annual international visitors to the United*
23 *States and the annual value of travel and tourism*
24 *commerce in the United States during such 10-year*
25 *period;*

1 (2) *the resources needed to achieve the goals es-*
 2 *tablished pursuant to paragraph (1); and*

3 (3) *recommendations for statutory or regulatory*
 4 *changes that would be necessary to achieve such goals.*

5 **SEC. 5. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
 6 **BOARD.**

7 *Section 3 of the Act of July 19, 1940, entitled “An*
 8 *Act to encourage travel in the United States, and for other*
 9 *purposes” (15 U.S.C. 1546) is amended—*

10 (1) *by striking “SEC. 3.” and all that follows*
 11 *through “The Secretary of the Interior is authorized”*
 12 *and inserting the following:*

13 **“SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
 14 **BOARD; ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

15 “(a) *UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVI-*
 16 *SORY BOARD.—*

17 “(1) *IN GENERAL.—There is established the*
 18 *United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board*
 19 *(referred to in this subsection as the ‘Board’), the*
 20 *members of which shall be appointed by the Secretary*
 21 *of Commerce for 2-year terms from among companies*
 22 *and organizations in the travel and tourism industry.*

23 “(2) *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Assistant Sec-*
 24 *retary for Travel and Tourism shall serve as the Ex-*
 25 *ecutive Director of the Board.*

1 “(3) *EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.*—*The Director of*
2 *the National Travel and Tourism Office of the Inter-*
3 *national Trade Administration shall serve as the Ex-*
4 *ecutive Secretariat for the Board.*

5 “(4) *FUNCTIONS.*—*The Board’s Charter shall*
6 *specify that the Board will—*

7 “(A) *serve as the advisory body to the Sec-*
8 *retary of Commerce on matters relating to the*
9 *travel and tourism industry in the United*
10 *States;*

11 “(B) *advise the Secretary of Commerce on*
12 *Government policies and programs that affect the*
13 *United States travel and tourism industry;*

14 “(C) *offer counsel on current and emerging*
15 *issues;*

16 “(D) *provide a forum for discussing and*
17 *proposing solutions to problems related to the*
18 *travel and tourism industry; and*

19 “(E) *provide advice regarding the domestic*
20 *travel and tourism industry as an economic en-*
21 *gine.*

22 “(5) *RECOVERY STRATEGY.*—*The Board shall as-*
23 *sist the Assistant Secretary in the development and*
24 *implementation of the COVID–19 public health emer-*

1 *gency recovery strategy required under section 3(f)(1)*
2 *of the Visit America Act.*

3 “(b) *ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF*
4 *TOURIST TRAVEL.—The Secretary of Commerce is author-*
5 *ized*”; and

6 (2) by striking “*the Secretary of the Interior to*
7 *serve*” and inserting “*the Secretary of Commerce to*
8 *serve*”.

9 **SEC. 6. DATA ON DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

10 *The Secretary of Commerce, subject to the availability*
11 *of appropriations, shall collect and make public aggregate*
12 *data on domestic travel and tourism trends.*

13 **SEC. 7. COMPLETION OF PROCEEDING.**

14 *If the Secretary of Commerce has, before the date of*
15 *the enactment of this Act, taken action that in whole or*
16 *in part implements this Act or the amendments made by*
17 *this Act, the Secretary is not required to revisit such action,*
18 *but only to the extent such action is consistent with this*
19 *Act and the amendments made by this Act.*

20 **SEC. 8. DEFINED TERM.**

21 *In this Act, the term “COVID–19 public health emer-*
22 *gency”—*

23 (1) *means the public health emergency first de-*
24 *clared on January 31, 2020, by the Secretary of*
25 *Health and Human Services under section 319 of the*

1 *Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) with re-*
2 *spect to COVID–19; and*
3 *(2) includes any renewal of such declaration*
4 *pursuant to such section 319.*

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