

# U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

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**Senator Dan Sullivan**

302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-0205

**Representative Ed Case**

2443 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-1101

**Representative Dina Titus**

2464 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-2801

**Senator Brian Schatz**

722 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-1105

**Representative Gus Bilirakis**

2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-0912

November 20, 2020

Dear Senators Sullivan and Schatz and Representatives Case, Titus, and Bilirakis,

On behalf of the undersigned businesses, organizations and industry representatives, we wanted to thank you for introducing S. 3831 / H.R. 4840, the "Visit America Act."

In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, spending by resident and international travelers totaled \$1.1 trillion, which generated a total of \$2.6 trillion in total economic output that supported 15.8 million jobs. U.S. travel exports totaled \$255 billion while travel imports totaled \$196 billion, creating a \$59 billion travel trade surplus. Travel and Tourism is America's largest service export, yet the U.S. is the only country among the top 30 international destinations without a cabinet, sub-cabinet or equivalent leadership position dedicated to travel and tourism.

The Visit America Act would create an Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism position at the Department of Commerce, providing the industry with invaluable leadership within the government to find new ways to boost travel exports, including by helping the U.S. compete for international conferences and events. This new position would be responsible for setting international arrivals and travel spending goals, with the ability to work across agencies and stakeholders to develop strategies and plans to pursue these goals.

The position would also be crucial in the effort to help the U.S. recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The new Assistant Secretary would be responsible for developing a recovery plan for the industry, which has been devastated by the pandemic, and develop plans to help protect the industry in the event of a future emergency. This is leadership and direction the industry greatly needs. Since the beginning of March, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in over \$402 billion in cumulative losses for the U.S. travel economy. The leisure and hospitality industry accounted for 11% of pre-pandemic employment in the United States, yet has suffered 36% of all job losses in 2020. A coordinated approach to supporting travel exports have long been in need, but the pandemic has made the urgency even more clear

We appreciate your work to introduce the Visit America Act. We fully support this legislation and are ready to help in whatever way possible to help move this legislation forward.

Thank you,

Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)	Marriott International
Accor	MGM Resorts
AMC Institute	Meeting Professionals International (MPI)
American Gaming Association	Miles Partnership
American Hotel and Lodging Association	Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB
American Resort Development Association	National Retail Federation
American Society of Association Executives	National Tour Association (NTA)
American Society of Travel Advisors	New Orleans & Company
Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau	Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau
Associated Luxury Hotels International	PSAV
Association Forum	Sabre Corporation
Best Western Hotels & Resorts	San Francisco Travel Association
California Travel Association	Samantha Brown Media
Choose Chicago	SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment
CityPASS	Society of Incentive Travel Excellence
Cruise Lines International Association	Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO)
Destination DC	South Dakota Department of Tourism
Destinations International	STR
Experience Kissimmee	Travel Michigan
Global Business Travel Association	Travel Oregon
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority	Travel Technology Association
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau	U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Hilton	U.S. Travel Association
Hyatt	United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)	Utah Office of Tourism and Film
International Association of Exhibitions and Events	Virginia Tourism Corporation
InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)	Visit Baltimore
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority	Visit Denver
Leisure Pass Group	Visit Myrtle Beach
Loews Hotels	Visit Philadelphia
Longwoods International	Visit Seattle