



News From Congressman Bill Delahunt

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DELAHUNT AND BLUNT INTRODUCE BILL TO BOOST INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Bill Delahunt joined with House Republican Whip Roy Blunt (Mo.) to introduce the “Travel Promotion Act of 2007,” legislation aimed at enhancing America’s international status as a first-rate tourist destination, and reversing what has become a steady decline in overseas travel to the United States.

“The 17 percent decline in overseas travel to the United States since 9/11 has cost America more than \$100 billion in lost visitor spending, almost 200,000 jobs and \$16 billion in lost tax receipts,” Delahunt said. “I am pleased to join with House Republican Whip Roy Blunt and the chairmen of the House Travel and Tourism Caucus, Congressmen Sam Farr and Jon Porter, as we work to reverse this trend and once again make the United States competitive in this important segment of our nation’s economy.”

“We’ve seen a fairly sharp reduction in overseas travel to the United States in recent years, while international travel continues to boom,” said Blunt. “The bill we introduced today seeks to address this disturbing trend in a responsible way by reminding international travelers that the United States is still the greatest place in the world to visit, and creating the public-private partnership necessary to facilitate that discussion.”

The bill, H.R. 3232, will address America’s overseas travel crisis by establishing a travel promotion campaign funded equally by overseas travelers and contributions from the U.S. travel industry.

The effort would be administered by an independent, but accountable, non-profit organization, and would be a nationally coordinated, public-private campaign to clearly explain U.S. security policies, improve perceptions of the U.S. travel process and promote the United States as a premier travel destination. Key elements of the bill include:

- Establishment of the Corporation for Travel Promotion, an independent, non-profit corporation governed by a 14-member board of private-sector directors appointed by the Secretary of Commerce.

- **Creation of a Travel Promotion Fund, financed by a convenience fee paid by overseas travelers and collected via the Electronic Travel Authorization system, which just passed Congress as part of HR 1. These fees would be fully matched by private industry donations to the fund.**
- **Much-needed updates to current law, including the elimination of the Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board (a duplicative independent organization), the restructuring of the Tourism Policy Council to ensure that our homeland security is properly considered, and the clarification of the Secretary of Commerce's duties and responsibilities relating to travel promotion.**

“The unfortunate perception that America does not welcome foreign visitors is hurting our economy and sullyng our image abroad,” Blunt continued. “America has so much to offer and I am confident this bill will create the public-private partnership needed to encourage overseas travelers to come experience the beauty and hospitality of our nation.”

Delahunt added: “I look forward to working with my friend and the primary co-sponsor of this bill, Republican Whip Roy Blunt, along with Congressman Farr and Porter, and my House colleagues to enact the Travel Promotion Act into law.”