

Welcoming Business Travelers While Strengthening Security

Sign Bipartisan Travel and Tourism Caucus Letter on the Visa Integrity Fee and ESTA

BACKGROUND

Global business travel supports U.S. economic growth, enabling companies to invest, collaborate, and create jobs across the country. Inbound travel is one of the largest U.S. services exports, generating significant export revenue and supporting American jobs. As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implements new policies affecting international visitors, those measures should strengthen security and compliance while preserving the United States' ability to welcome business travelers efficiently.

THE ISSUE

Two pending DHS actions create uncertainty for international business travelers and the U.S. employers who depend on them:

- **The Visa Integrity Fee.** Established under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, this surcharge of at least \$250 applies to most nonimmigrant visas and is refundable when travelers fully comply with their visa terms. However, DHS has not issued operational guidance on how reimbursement will work, leaving travelers and employers without important answers.
- **Potential ESTA changes.** DHS is considering changes to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), a cornerstone of secure and efficient travel that facilitates millions of legitimate visits each year while maintaining strong security standards. DHS and the Department of State are actively engaged in an interagency coordination process regarding the implementation of these changes.

THE BIPARTISAN LETTER

The Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus Co-Chairs **Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)** and **Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV)** are leading a bipartisan letter to DHS Secretary Mullin. The letter respectfully asks the Department to:

- Provide clear operational guidance on the Visa Integrity Fee reimbursement process, including which agency administers it, how travelers apply, what documentation is required, and the expected processing timeline.
- Ensure any ESTA changes preserve the program's efficiency and accessibility for legitimate travelers, including short-term business visitors.
- Engage stakeholders and evaluate the economic impact of any proposed ESTA modifications before moving forward.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **It protects a major U.S. export.** Smooth, predictable entry processes keep the United States competitive for the international business travel that drives investment and jobs.
- **It is a reasonable, bipartisan ask.** The letter does not oppose the fee or the security review; it simply requests clarity, stakeholder input, and an economic review before implementation.
- **It reduces uncertainty for employers.** Clear guidance helps the policy function as intended without imposing avoidable costs or confusion on travelers and the companies that send them.

THE ASK: Sign the bipartisan Bilirakis-Titus letter to DHS

GBTA urges Members of Congress to add their names to the Travel and Tourism Caucus letter requesting clarity on the Visa Integrity Fee and a balanced, stakeholder-informed approach to any ESTA changes. To sign on, please contact:

Rep. Bilirakis' office: Jonathan Vecchi, Jonathan.Vecchi@mail.house.gov

Rep. Titus' office: Anna Moeller, Anna.Moeller@mail.house.gov