



# U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION 2024 ADVOCACY AND POLICY PRIORITIES

## ADVOCACY GOALS FOR 2024

U.S. Travel will capitalize on the more challenging legislative and regulatory environment of a Presidential election year to pursue the following advocacy goals:

- 1. STRENGTHEN BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR TRAVEL'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA.** Develop and secure the introduction of (3) standalone bills to broaden bipartisan support for policies that streamline visa processing, improve customs and entry procedures, and modernize domestic air passenger screening.
- 2. DEEPEN THE BENCH OF CONGRESSIONAL CHAMPIONS.** Significantly expand the [Travel Works](#) program, deepening relationships with elected officials alongside U.S. Travel members and industry partners, with a goal of 24 events in 2024.
- 3. ESTABLISH TRAVEL AS ESSENTIAL WITH CONGRESS, THE ADMINISTRATION AND THOUGHT LEADERS.** Deliver research and messaging demonstrating travel as an economic powerhouse, social benefactor, and paramount to the United States' global competitiveness. Elevate U.S. Travel's presence among elite policymaking and political circles - including the international business community.

## TOP 10 POLICY GOALS FOR 2024

In 2024, U.S. Travel's public affairs team will be laser-focused on aggressively advocating for 10 policy goals to increase travel to and within the United States. The policy goals align the U.S. Travel Association's strategic priorities to:

### IMPROVE THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE FROM POINT A TO POINT B

- 1. SEAMLESS AND SECURE TRAVEL:** Create a 10-year vision for seamless and secure air travel.
  - **U.S. Travel's Seamless and Secure Travel Commission** will create a bold, but achievable, vision to facilitate growth and improve the global competitiveness of America's travel industry. The Commission will collaborate with U.S. Travel members, U.S. Government officials, and Congressional leaders to develop policy recommendations that will modernize travel security, facilitation, technology, and infrastructure. The primary areas of focus for the Commission will be:
    - CBP Entry Process
    - TSA Passenger Screening
    - Visitor visa processing and Visa Waiver Program
    - Aviation technology and infrastructure
- 2. IDENTITY VERIFICATION TECHNOLOGIES:** Continue to advocate for the appropriate use of identity verification technologies to improve the passenger experience and strengthen national security.

## CONGRESS

- Congress should oppose legislation that would limit or halt TSA's use of identity verification technology, which vastly improves the security of the aviation system and greatly enhances the passenger experience. Specifically, Congress should oppose S.3361, the Passenger Privacy Protection Act and S.681 / H.R.1404, the Facial Recognition and Biometric Technology Moratorium Act.

- 3. VISITOR VISA PROCESSING:** Continue to reduce interview wait times for first-time visitor visas, which are still nearly 400 days in top inbound markets to the U.S.

## ADMINISTRATION

- **Set an interview wait time goal.** Urge the State Department to set a goal of providing 90% of first-time visitor visa applicants with an interview within 30 days of application.
- **Target resources to consular posts with the highest wait times.** Urge the State Department to surge consular staff, expand hours of operation at consulates to accommodate more visitor visa interviews, and set aside dedicated blocks of time for visitor visa interview appointments at locations with the highest wait times.
- **Efficiently process visitor visas for large U.S. events.** Partner with the State Department to establish a formal and permanent process to efficiently provide visitor visas for attendees of large international events held in the U.S. The State Department currently provides ad hoc support on a case-by-case basis for event organizers who submit requests through a generic email address ([BusinessVisa@state.gov](mailto:BusinessVisa@state.gov)).

## CONGRESS

- **Build Congressional support for the Visa Processing Improvement Act.** In the Senate, secure bipartisan cosponsors for the Visa Processing Improvement Act (S. 2632), which sets a permanent interview wait time goal, provides the State Department with resources to achieve that goal, and makes permanent the State Department's authorities to waive in-person interviews for certain low-risk nonimmigrant visa applicants. In the House, secure the introduction of, and build bipartisan support for, complimentary legislation to the Visa Processing Improvement Act.

- 4. CBP AND TSA PASSENGER SCREENING:** Reduce U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) wait times and streamline passenger screening procedures.

## ADMINISTRATION

- **Implement a pilot program where low-risk international passengers are not required to meet with a CBP officer.** Work with CBP, airports, and airlines to develop a pilot program that uses biometric facial matching, targeting and vetting capabilities to clear low-risk passengers without visiting a CBP officer and focus CBP staffing resources on high-risk passengers.
- **Restart CBP's Preclearance Program:** Modify CBP's selection criteria for new preclearance locations to place a greater emphasis on travel facilitation and maximizing benefits for U.S. airports and airlines. Urge CBP to begin negotiations with the UK, Japan, Canada, and other countries that are willing and ready to fund new preclearance locations. Work with CBP to establish five new preclearance locations in the next three years.
- **Standup TSA's One-Stop Security Pilot Program:** Advocate for TSA to start in 2024 the

One-Stop Security pilot program with at least two U.S. gateway and last-point-of-departure foreign airports.

- **Develop a roadmap to modify the TSA liquids ban:** Work with TSA and Congress on a funding and procurement plan to increase within the next 5 years the limitation on liquids that passengers can carry onboard a domestic flight.

## TRAVEL MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5. **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION:** Advocate for nationally significant travel mobility projects and develop legislative priorities for the next major infrastructure bill due in 2026.

### CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION

- **Advocate for nationally significant travel mobility projects:** Identify and promote the 3-to-5 most consequential travel mobility projects that can transform travel to and within the U.S. Advocate for Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide the necessary funding and regulatory approvals for these projects.
  - **Develop surface transportation policy priorities for the next infrastructure bill.** Begin developing rail and surface policies that the industry can advocate for in the next surface transportation reauthorization or infrastructure bill in 2026.
6. **NATIONAL PARKS:** Develop and build Congressional support for policies to improve and modernize the National Park System in preparation for the reauthorization of the Great American Outdoors Act in 2025.

## ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE INDUSTRY'S GLOBAL COMPETIVENESS

7. **GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP:** Strengthen the Federal government's leadership and focus on policies to grow all segments of travel to and within the United States.

### ADMINISTRATION

- **Appoint an Assistant Secretary for Travel & Tourism:** Urge the Administration and Senate to swiftly appoint and confirm a new Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism, which will strengthen federal leadership on travel issues.

### CONGRESS

- **Fully fund the Office of the Assistant Secretary:** Secure language in the final FY24 and FY25 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bills that allow the International Trade Administration to fund the necessary staffing and expenses for the office of the Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism.
8. **SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL:** Leverage the Sustainable Travel Coalition to spotlight and support industry-wide progress on sustainable travel, including in the media, with Congress, and the Administration.

### CONGRESS

- **Protect sustainable travel investments:** Guard against legislation to eliminate tax incentives or cut federal investments in sustainable travel - including tax incentives for sustainable aviation fuel, electric vehicle charging stations, and energy efficient commercial buildings.

- 9. TRAVEL WORKFORCE:** Expand access to a diverse, skilled, and thriving workforce that can foster innovation, improve customer experiences, and support industry growth.

**CONGRESS**

- **Permanently increase available H-2B visas:** Continue to engage with the H-2B Coalition and Congress on legislation that would increase the availability of H-2B visas to help address the workforce shortage in the travel industry.
- 10. MONITOR AND MITIGATE INDUSTRY THREATS:** Monitor national issues that pose an elevated risk to the travel industry and develop strategies to mitigate such risks if warranted, whether related to federal tax policies, federal emissions regulations, credit card reward programs, workforce, national parks, so-called “junk fees”, or public health risks.

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