

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 6965
OFFERED BY Mr. Soto _____

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Visit America Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM.**

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

6 (1) by striking “There shall be in the Depart-
7 ment two additional Assistant Secretaries” and in-
8 serting “(1) There shall be in the Department 3 ad-
9 ditional Assistant Secretaries, including the Assist-
10 ant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tour-
11 ism,”; and

12 (2) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(2) The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for
14 Travel and Tourism shall—

15 “(A) be appointed by the President, sub-
16 ject to the advice and consent of the Senate;
17 and

1 “(B) report directly to the Under Sec-
2 retary for International Trade.”.

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

5 (a) VISITATION GOALS.—The Assistant Secretary of
6 Commerce for Travel and Tourism (referred to in this sec-
7 tion as the “Assistant Secretary”), appointed pursuant to
8 section 2(d) of the Reorganization Plan Numbered 3 of
9 1979, as amended by section 2, shall—

10 (1) establish an annual visitation goal, con-
11 sistent with the goals of the travel and tourism
12 strategy developed pursuant to section 4(1), for—

13 (A) the number of international visitors to
14 the United States; and

15 (B) the value of travel and tourism com-
16 merce;

17 (2) develop recommendations for achieving the
18 annual goals established pursuant to paragraph (1);

19 (3) ensure that travel and tourism policy is de-
20 veloped in consultation with—

21 (A) the Tourism Policy Council;

22 (B) the Secretary of Homeland Security;

23 (C) the National Travel and Tourism Of-
24 fice;

25 (D) Brand USA;

1 (E) the United States Travel and Tourism
2 Advisory Board; and

3 (F) travel industry partners, including
4 public and private destination marketing orga-
5 nizations, travel and tourism suppliers, and
6 labor representatives from these industries;

7 (4) establish short-, medium-, and long-term
8 timelines for implementing the recommendations de-
9 veloped pursuant to paragraph (2);

10 (5) conduct Federal agency needs assessments,
11 in consultation with the Office of Management and
12 Budget, to identify the resources, statutory or regu-
13 latory changes, and private sector engagement need-
14 ed to achieve the annual visitation goals; and

15 (6) provide assessments and recommendations
16 to—

17 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
18 and Transportation of the Senate;

19 (B) the Committee on Energy and Com-
20 merce of the House of Representatives; and

21 (C) the public through a publicly accessible
22 website.

23 (b) VISA ADJUDICATION.—The Assistant Secretary,
24 in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Sec-
25 retary of Homeland Security, shall—

1 (1) explore strategies for improving visitor visa
2 processing with respect to—

3 (A) the maximum time for processing
4 visas, by visitation type;

5 (B) regulatory and policy changes needed
6 to meet the visa processing goals referred to in
7 subparagraph (A), including changes regarding
8 technology, processing centers, and training;
9 and

10 (C) streamlining visa applications and ad-
11 judications, including application design and
12 data collection procedures; and

13 (2) explore opportunities to establish pilot pro-
14 grams to integrate technology into the visitor visa
15 adjudication process, including video conferencing
16 and biometrics.

17 (c) DOMESTIC TRAVEL AND TOURISM.—The Assist-
18 ant Secretary, to the extent feasible, shall—

19 (1) evaluate, on an ongoing basis, domestic pol-
20 icy options for supporting competitiveness with re-
21 spect to the strengths, weaknesses, and growth of
22 the domestic travel industry;

23 (2) develop recommendations and goals to sup-
24 port and enhance domestic tourism, separated by
25 business and leisure; and

1 (3) engage public and private stakeholders to
2 support domestic tourism.

3 (d) WORKFORCE.—The Assistant Secretary shall—

4 (1) consult with the Secretary of Labor to de-
5 velop strategies and best practices for improving the
6 timeliness and reliability of travel and tourism work-
7 force data;

8 (2) work with the Secretary of Labor and the
9 Bureau of Economic Analysis to improve travel and
10 tourism industry data; and

11 (3) provide recommendations for policy en-
12 hancements and efficiencies.

13 (e) INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRAVEL FACILITA-
14 TION.—The Assistant Secretary, in coordination with rel-
15 evant Federal agencies, shall work to increase and facili-
16 tate international business travel to the United States and
17 ensure competitiveness by engaging in, at a minimum—

18 (1) facilitating large meetings, incentives, con-
19 ferences, and exhibitions to be hosted in the United
20 States;

21 (2) emphasizing rural and other destinations
22 rich in cultural heritage or ecological tourism,
23 among other uniquely American destinations, as lo-
24 cations for hosting international meetings, incen-

1 tives, conferences, and exhibitions in the United
2 States; and

3 (3) facilitating sports and recreation events and
4 activities, which shall be hosted in the United
5 States.

6 (f) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—

7 (1) INITIAL RECOVERY STRATEGY.—Not later
8 than 1 year after amounts are appropriated to ac-
9 complish the purposes of this section, the Assistant
10 Secretary, in consultation with public and private
11 stakeholders identified in subsection (a)(3) and pub-
12 lic health officials, shall develop and implement a
13 COVID–19 public health emergency recovery strat-
14 egy to assist the United States travel and tourism
15 industry to quickly recover from the pandemic.

16 (2) FUTURE RECOVERY STRATEGIES.—After
17 assisting in the implementation of the strategy de-
18 veloped pursuant to paragraph (1), the Assistant
19 Secretary, in consultation with appropriate public
20 and private stakeholders, shall develop additional re-
21 covery strategies for the travel and tourism industry
22 in anticipation of other unforeseen catastrophic
23 events that would significantly affect the travel and
24 tourism industry, such as hurricanes, floods,

1 tsunamis, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, and
2 pandemics.

3 (3) COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.—In developing
4 the COVID–19 public health emergency recovery
5 strategy under paragraph (1) and additional recovery
6 strategies for the travel and tourism industry
7 under paragraph (2), the Assistant Secretary shall
8 conduct cost-benefit analyses that take into account
9 the health and economic effects of public health
10 mitigation measures on the travel and tourism industry.
11 industry.

12 (g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

13 (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The Assistant
14 Secretary shall produce an annual forecasting report
15 on the travel and tourism industry, to the extent
16 feasible, which shall include current and anticipated—
17 pated—

18 (A) domestic employment needs;

19 (B) international inbound volume and
20 spending, taking into account the lasting effects
21 of the COVID–19 public health emergency and
22 the impact of the recovery strategy implemented
23 pursuant to subsection (f)(1); and

1 (C) domestic volume and spending, includ-
2 ing Federal and State public land travel and
3 tourism data.

4 (2) BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—The Di-
5 rector of the Bureau of Economic Analysis should
6 annually update, to the extent feasible, the Travel
7 and Tourism Satellite Accounts, including—

8 (A) State level travel and tourism spending
9 data;

10 (B) travel and tourism workforce data for
11 full-time and part-time employment; and

12 (C) Federal and State public lands outdoor
13 recreational activity and tourism spending data.

14 (3) NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OF-
15 FICE.—The Director of the National Travel and
16 Tourism Office—

17 (A) in partnership with the Bureau of Eco-
18 nomic Analysis, shall report international ar-
19 rival and spending data on a regular monthly
20 schedule, which shall be made available to the
21 Travel and Tourism Advisory Board and to the
22 public through a publicly available website; and

23 (B) shall include questions in the Survey
24 of International Air Travelers regarding wait-

1 times, visits to public lands, and State data, to
2 the extent applicable.

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

4 Not less frequently than once every 10 years, the Sec-
5 retary of Commerce, in consultation with the United
6 States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, the Tourism
7 Policy Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security,
8 shall develop and submit to Congress a 10-year travel and
9 tourism strategy, which shall include—

10 (1) the establishment of goals with respect to
11 the number of annual international visitors to the
12 United States and the annual value of travel and
13 tourism commerce in the United States during such
14 10-year period;

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

17 (3) recommendations for statutory or regulatory
18 changes that would be necessary to achieve such
19 goals.

20 **SEC. 5. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
21 **BOARD.**

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

1 (1) by striking “**SEC. 3**” and all that follows
2 through “The Secretary of the Interior is author-
3 ized” and inserting the following:

4 **“SEC. 3. UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY**
5 **BOARD; ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

6 “(a) UNITED STATES TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVI-
7 SORY BOARD.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the
9 United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board
10 (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Board’), the
11 members of which shall be appointed by the Sec-
12 retary of Commerce for 2-year terms from among
13 companies and organizations in the travel and tour-
14 ism industry.

15 “(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Assistant
16 Secretary for Travel and Tourism shall serve as the
17 Executive Director of the Board.

18 “(3) EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.—The Director
19 of the National Travel and Tourism Office of the
20 International Trade Administration shall serve as
21 the Executive Secretariat for the Board.

22 “(4) FUNCTIONS.—The Board’s Charter shall
23 specify that the Board will—

24 “(A) serve as the advisory body to the Sec-
25 retary of Commerce on matters relating to the

1 travel and tourism industry in the United
2 States;

3 “(B) advise the Secretary of Commerce on
4 Government policies and programs that affect
5 the United States travel and tourism industry;

6 “(C) offer counsel on current and emerg-
7 ing issues;

8 “(D) provide a forum for discussing and
9 proposing solutions to problems related to the
10 travel and tourism industry; and

11 “(E) provide advice regarding the domestic
12 travel and tourism industry as an economic en-
13 gine.

14 “(5) RECOVERY STRATEGY.—The Board shall
15 assist the Assistant Secretary in the development
16 and implementation of the COVID–19 public health
17 emergency recovery strategy required under section
18 3(f)(1) of the Visit America Act.

19 “(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTION OF
20 TOURIST TRAVEL.—The Secretary of Commerce is au-
21 thorized”; and

22 (2) by striking “the Secretary of the Interior to
23 serve” and inserting “the Secretary of Commerce to
24 serve”.

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

2 The Secretary of Commerce, subject to the avail-
3 ability of appropriations, shall collect and make public ag-
4 gregate data on domestic travel and tourism trends.

5 **SEC. 7. COMPLETION OF PROCEEDING.**

6 If the Secretary of Commerce has, before the date
7 of the enactment of this Act, taken action that in whole
8 or in part implements this Act or the amendments made
9 by this Act, the Secretary is not required to revisit such
10 action, but only to the extent such action is consistent with
11 this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

12 **SEC. 8. DEFINED TERM.**

13 In this Act, the term “COVID–19 public health emer-
14 gency”—

15 (1) means the public health emergency first de-
16 clared on January 31, 2020, by the Secretary of
17 Health and Human Services under section 319 of
18 the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) with
19 respect to COVID–19; and

20 (2) includes any renewal of such declaration
21 pursuant to such section 319.

