

## VISA REFORM

### 2011 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

VISA REFORM	S. 1601 S.Rpt. 112-85	H.R. 3039	S. 1653	S. 1746/H.R. 3341		S. 497/ H.R. 959	
2011 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY	Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2012	Welcoming Business Travelers and Tourists to America Act of 2011	International Tourism Facilitation Act	Visa Improvements to Stimulate International Tourism to the United States of America Act (VISIT USA Act)		Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act	
<b>Lead Sponsors</b>	Pat Leahy (D-VT) Lindsey Graham (R-SC)	Joe Heck (R-NV)	Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) Roy Blunt (R-MO)	Chuck Schumer (D- NY) Mike Lee (R-UT)	Hirono (D-HI,2) Drier (R-CA, 22)	Barbara Mikulski (D- MD) Mark Kirk (R-IL)	Mike Quigley (D- IL)
<b>Cosponsors</b>	Language requested by Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	23 (14 R, 9 D)	Mark Begich (D-AK) Chris Coons (D-DE) Dean Heller (R-NV) Mary Landrieu (D-LA) Mark Warner (D-VA)			Mark Begich (D-AK) Sherrod Brown (D-OH) Amy Klobuchar (D- MN)	30 (12 R, 18 D)
<b>Committee Referrals &amp; Action</b>	Senate Appropriations, approved by voice vote on 9/21/11	House Judiciary; House Foreign Affairs	Senate Judiciary	Senate Judiciary	House Judiciary; Homeland Security	Senate Judiciary	House Judiciary; House Intelligence
<b>Visa Processing Standard and Consular Staffing</b>	Requires State to meet its 30 day visa processing standard in Brazil, China & India and hire sufficient consular and LNA officers to meet the standard. (Sec. 7079(a)(1)(a), conference report p. 13)	State shall set a 12- day visa processing standard for Brazil, China & India and shall use visa fees to hire sufficient consular and LNA officers to meet the standard. (Sec. 3)					

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<p>Longer Visa Terms</p>	<p>State shall review extending visas to Chinese nationals for 2 years instead of the current 1 year visa. (Sec. 7079(a)(1)(B))</p>	<p>State may agree to leisure and business visas terms on a non-reciprocal basis with specific countries if there are “no adversarial effects”. (Sec. 7)</p>		<p>State shall lengthen the visa terms for Chinese nationals from 1 to 5 years if applicants are screened via ESTA program. (Sec. 2)</p>	
<p>Visa Video-conferencing</p>	<p>State “may” develop a visa video conferencing pilot program if it can be conducted consistent with security controls. (Sec. 7079(b), conference report p. 13-14)</p>	<p>State “shall” conduct a 2-year video conferencing pilot program and report on its viability for expansion. (Sec. 4)</p>		<p>State “shall” develop a visa video conferencing pilot program if it can be conducted consistent with security controls. Premium processing fees shall cover costs of technology to carry out the pilot. (Secs. 3-4)</p>	
<p>Visa Wait Time Information</p>		<p>State shall post historical data about visa interview wait times for appointments and visa processing. (Sec. 5)</p>			

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<p style="text-align: center;">Visa Interview Waivers</p>			<p>State may waive the mandatory visa interview for visa renewals occurring within 4 years of the original visa issuance, rather than 1 year under current law. (Sec. 3)</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Visa Interviews Conducted by Mobile Teams</p>				<p>Premium processing fees shall cover costs to create mobile interview teams for cities over 1M in population without a U.S. consulate or embassy. (Sec. 3)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Visa Waiver Program</p>				<p>DHS may admit countries with either visa refusal or visa overstay rates not more than 3 percent if country meets other law enforcement criteria and has a refusal rate that is declining and not more than 10 percent. Also establishes a probationary period for non-compliant countries. Also requires GAO to review overstay tracking. (Sec. 7)</p>	<p>DHS may admit countries with an overstay rate not more than 3 percent if country meets other law enforcement criteria. Also establishes a probationary period for non-compliant countries. Also requires GAO to review overstay tracking. (Secs. 2-5)</p>

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<b>Off-Peak Visa Fees</b>				Permits the State Department to lower visa application fees during off-peak visa application seasons to give travelers an incentive to apply for visas when demand is lower. (Sec. 6)	
<b>Expedited Visa Services</b>				This section requires the Secretary of State to develop “premium processing” for B-1 and B-2 visas (tourist and business travel visas). A visa interview appointment and adjudication would take place within 3 business days, absent compelling security concerns. Fees shall be set to cover costs of premium processing, visa videoconferencing technology and mobile interview units. (Sec. 3)	

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<p><b>Long-Term Visa Planning</b></p>	<p>State shall report to Congress on planning for Brazil, China &amp; India on visa issuance standards, 5 year forecasts, comparison with Commerce Department arrival projections, and impacts on projected wait times and officers. (Sec. 7079(a)(1)(B))</p>	<p>State shall report to Congress on planning for Brazil, China &amp; India, including projected demand through 2020, comparison with Commerce Department arrival projections, current processes, staffing projections, and strategies to maximize officers and space. (Sec. 6)</p>	<p>State shall report to Congress on planning for Brazil, China &amp; India, including projected demand through 2020, comparison with Commerce Department arrival projections, current processes, staffing projections, and strategies to maximize officers and space. (Sec. 4)</p>		
<p><b>State Department Budgeting</b></p>			<p>State may retain visa fees collected above amount collected in FY11 for consular use. (Sec. 2)</p>		
<p><b>Canadian Visas</b></p>				<p>New visa category for Canadians living but not employed in the U.S. up to 240 days. (Sec. 5)</p>	

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<p><b>Home Buyer Visas</b></p>				<p>New nonimmigrant visa category for persons spending 500K to purchase a house in the U.S. and not employed in the U.S. (Sec. 8)</p>	
<p><b>Expediting Entry for Priority Foreign Visitors</b></p>				<p>DHS shall expand Global Entry to individuals from international organizations. (Sec. 9)</p>	