

Co-sponsor H.R. 2935, the Travel Promotion Act of 2009
From: The Honorable Roy Blunt
Sent By: eric.gustafson@mail.house.gov
Bill: H.R. 2935
Date: 6/23/2009

Dear Colleague:

Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus Co-chairs Sam Farr and Roy Blunt urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 2935, the "Travel Promotion Act," which would create a nationally coordinated campaign jointly managed by government and the private sector to better communicate America's travel policies and welcome foreign visitors. The Act specifies that travel promotion be funded – at no cost to U.S. taxpayers – by the private sector together with a modest fee paid by foreign travelers. The last measure introduced in the 110th Congress enjoyed the vigorous support of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the U.S. Olympic Committee, and was co-sponsored by 244 House Members. A Senate companion bill (S. 1023) is currently under consideration by the Senate and enjoys the support of 46 co-sponsors.

Key Elements of the Bill

- Establishes a Corporation for Travel Promotion, an independent, non-profit corporation governed by a 14-member board of directors appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. Board members are required to have professional expertise in travel, international travel promotion and marketing, and to broadly represent the wide variety of travel-related industries in the United States.
- Establishes a Travel Promotion Fund whereby private industry contributions are matched with a government contribution. Federal contributions to the Fund are financed by a \$10 fee paid by foreign travelers from Visa Waiver countries and collected via the Department of Homeland Security's Electronic Travel Authorization system. (American travelers frequently pay similar fees when traveling to other countries.) This fund would put the United States on par with Australia, Greece, Mexico, the United Kingdom and dozens of other countries that spend tens of millions of dollars annually to compete for visitors.
- Makes 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 Congressional Budget Office recently found that enactment of the Senate version of the Travel Promotion Act, which closely resembles the House version, would reduce the deficit by \$500 million over five years.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. To co-sponsor this bill or for more information, please contact John Juech at x67846 with Congressman Delahunt or Brian Diffell at x56536 with Congressman Blunt.

Sincerely,

Rep. Sam Farr
Co-Chair
Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus
Caucus

Rep. Roy Blunt
Co-Chair
Congressional Travel & Tourism