



December 14, 2021

Senator Jacky Rosen
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roger Wicker
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Rosen and Wicker:

On behalf of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), I write to support the Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021.

As you are all too familiar, the impact of COVID-19 on the business travel industry has been severe. While domestic and leisure travel have made significant progress, international and business travel remain far behind pre-pandemic norms. We estimate this year's global business travel spending will be 40% less than prior estimates, a loss of approximately \$550 billion in annual direct travel spending due to the pandemic.

The business travel industry needs additional support and resources to recover. As such, GBTA supports the Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 as a positive step in restoring global business travel and meetings in the U.S. and abroad.

In particular, GBTA supports the creation of an Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism within the Department of Commerce. This leadership role will be vital for establishing goals, pursuing strategies, and convening public and private sector stakeholders with the shared goal of increased international travel.

International companies need to know it is safe and open to send their employees to meetings and events in the U.S. The Visit America program and all other items overseen by this position including interagency cooperation, strategic decisions on tourism and improving safety and screening will be necessary to achieve this goal.

Also vital to business travel is the timely adjudication of visas. Opening U.S. markets to more international business travelers is exactly what our economy needs. GBTA supports examining all possible solutions, including:

- Shortening the maximum time for processing visas, by visitation type,
- regulatory and policy changes needed to meet the visa processing goals including changes regarding technology, processing centers, and training; and
- streamlining visa applications and adjudications, including application design and data collection procedures.

GBTA also supports the consideration of pilot programs to integrate technology into the visitor visa adjudication process, as well as expansion and improvements to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), preclearance operations and Trusted Traveler programs.



As international business travel comes back in safer, faster and more secure modes, trade between U.S. businesses and their international customers and partners will grow. Millions of face-to-face business meetings around the world drive jobs creation, increased corporate revenues, and expansion efforts.

This bill lays the foundation for accommodating the type of last-minute, invaluable business travel to U.S. essential in today's extremely competitive global marketplace.

We thank you for your continued support of the business travel industry. We look forward to working with you and your respective staffs as this important legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Neufang
CEO, GBTA