



December 16, 2021

U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Senator Rosen and Senator Wicker,

As the largest and broadest-based business organization in Nevada, the Vegas Chamber is focused on helping Nevada businesses succeed and grow. It has been part of the core mission of the Vegas Chamber to support employers, their employees, and the Southern Nevada community since its founding in 1911.

The Vegas Chamber has a long history of engaging on tourism and hospitality legislation at the federal level of government. As you know, Southern Nevada's tourism industry is an important economic engine in our community and state. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for championing the Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 and offer our support for this important piece of legislation.

The reality is, that Nevada was disparately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With a large tourism industry that is responsible for the employment of a major portion of Nevada's workforce, pandemic safety procedures regarding travel restrictions and social distancing hit employment hard. The COVID-19 pandemic saw initial unemployment claims as high as 438,000 which is seven times that of the claims made during the initial fallout of the "Great Recession" of 2009.

However, Nevada is leading the country's post-pandemic recovery. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported recently that our state achieved the largest GDP growth (10.9 percent) in the nation through the first quarter. Nevada businesses innovation and strength coupled with Nevada's favorable tax rates allowed for growth and recovery.

But employers in the travel and tourism industry need additional tools to ensure the next crisis when it may come can be managed with less economic disruption and better preparedness. The Omnibus and Tourism Act of 2021 sets the stage for the United States to work proactively with global partners to ensure steady continued recovery and hopefully readiness for what may occur in the future.

Particularly, the Vegas Chamber is supportive of the creation of the Assistant Secretary of Travel and Tourism and the Department of Commerce. As one of the leading industries in the nation, it is time for tourism to in the United States to take a center seat and receive the resources and focus it needs to thrive and continue to drive the American economy.

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The Vegas Chamber is encouraged that the Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act of 2021 has passed out of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and we look forward to working with you to ensure its swift passage out of the Senate and the full Congress.

If you have any questions or if I can provide any further assistance or information, please contact me at 702.575.8020. Thank you for your time, consideration, and your ongoing efforts to support Southern Nevada's employers, their employees, and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Beth Sewald".

Mary Beth Sewald
President & CEO