

## Travel Industry Executives Convene with Congress to Advance Travel Promotion Act

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Hundreds Of Travel Industry Executives Convene With Lawmakers To Advance International Travel Promotion Act

Travel industry leaders from across the U.S. are gathering in Washington, DC today to urge federal policymakers to take action on several travel-related priority issues. The second annual Travel Leadership Summit, hosted by the Travel Industry Association and the Travel Business Roundtable, kicks off today and concludes tomorrow.

'We have made great strides in improving our entry processes. But these efforts won't fully pay off until the U.S. implements a nationally coordinated program to communicate these changes to world travelers,' said Jay Rasulo, TIA's national chair and chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

The Travel Promotion Act of 2007 has been introduced in both the Senate and the House, S. 1661 and H.R. 3232, respectively. Nearly 100 organizations joined together to send a letter to Members of Congress on Monday in support of the legislation.

Mayor Douglas H. Palmer of Trenton, NJ and president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) will headline today's opening session. Under Palmer's leadership, the USCM recently adopted travel promotion as a principle for their 10-point plan, 'Strong Cities, Strong Families for a Strong America.'

'Mayors already understand what international travel and tourism means to our cities. Our job now is to make the federal government embrace the important economic engine and public diplomacy tool we have in travel. We stand ready to work with the travel industry to make travel the national priority it should be,' said Palmer.

The travel industry grassroots advocates will meet with their Members of Congress this evening during dinners and receptions around DC hosted by about 25 individual state delegations of travel industry leaders. The delegates will meet tomorrow with Members of Congress and their staffs on Capitol Hill.

The industry's top legislative issues include: the creation of an international travel promotion program to encourage overseas travel to the U.S., appropriate implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) with continued oversight from Congress, and increased funding for the nation's transportation infrastructure system.

'The important contributions of this industry to our nation have gone unnoticed for too long,' said Roger J. Dow, president and CEO of TIA. 'The Travel Leadership Summit is such a powerful two days because it unites the entirety of this diverse industry so that we are speaking with one loud and collective voice that our federal government can no longer ignore.'

Headlining Thursday's program are CNN commentator Paul Begala and host of MSNBC's Tucker, Tucker Carlson.

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