

**USTOA Congressional Caucus**  
**Legislative Issues**  
**June 2-3, 2026**

**National Parks**

USTOA/SYTA fully supports the National Park Service, a focal point of many of USTOA/SYTA members' tour packages. USTOA/SYTA strongly urges that our national parks be appropriately staffed so that all visitors can experience the majestic and historic national treasures spread out across the country and that Congress provides NPS robust funding in FY2026 to ensure that America's most iconic and inspirational places continue to thrive for generations to come.

USTOA/SYTA urges Congress not to codify National Park International Visitor Fees. USTOA/SYTA is supporting Travel and Tourism Industry efforts to urge Interior to adopt a more equitable framework that does not burden tour operators.

USTOA/SYTA additionally urges Congress to maintain oversight on the Great American Outdoors Act to ensure funding is used to address overdue repairs and the maintenance backlog at US national parks.

SUPPORT: S.1547- America the Beautiful Act. Sponsored by U.S. Senators Steve Daines (R-MT), Angus King (I-ME), Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Mark Warner (D-VA). The bill would provide an additional \$16 billion over eight years to address parks, forests and other public lands crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more critical repair needs. Dedicated federal funding is critical to tackle the maintenance needs in national parks, and so are the staff who steward them. Recent staffing reductions within the National Park Service and other federal lands threaten to undermine the progress made. Without adequate personnel to implement repairs and maintain safety, our parks, forests, refuges and other public lands face the risk of slipping backward.

**Promoting US Tourism**

USTOA/SYTA strongly supports BRAND USA and urges Congress to continue to support its mission to contribute to community prosperity throughout the country by marketing US destinations, driving international visitation, and clearly communicating U.S. travel policy.

With significant events on the horizon including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, driving tourism to the United States for these events is critical not only for overall economic impact, but also for supporting local economies that are counting on an influx of tourists.

SUPPORT: the Vital Investment in Sustaining International Tourism (VISIT) to the USA Act (H.R.6128/S.3220). Sponsored in the 119th Congress by Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Congresswoman Kathy Castor (D-FL) in the House of Representatives, and by Senators

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Dan Sullivan (D-AK) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in the U.S. Senate. This legislation would fully fund/restore funding for Brand USA for FY26 and FY27 by transferring \$160,000,000 from the Travel Promotion Fund to Brand USA. The bill would fund Brand USA through the allocation of Visa Waiver Program Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) fees.

USTOA/SYTA is pleased that the role of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism within the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration has been filled. Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Robert O'Leary was confirmed on January 12, 2026, and currently leads the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) by promoting U.S. tourism efforts.

**U.S.- Canada Travel**

USTOA/SYTA is concerned given the marked downturn in travel between the U.S. and Canada. There have been multiple reports of data that show a steep decline in Canadians travelling to the United States and vice-versa via several modes of transportation.

USTOA/SYTA is the founding member of the Beyond Borders Tourism Coalition (<https://www.beyondborderstourismcoalition.com>) a unified alliance of US and Canadian tourism, trade, and association stakeholders committed to safeguarding and promoting cross-border travel and trade. Promoting travel and tourism to and from Canada is extremely important to maintaining the relationship between North American allies and encouraging critical cultural exchange.

USTOA/SYTA supports meaningful steps and policies to restore and enhance travel between the two North American allies.

**SUPPORT:** Reintroducing H.R.5517/ S.4006 - Increasing our Nation's Value through Economic Support and Tourism in Our Communities Act (The INVEST in Our Communities Act). Sponsored in the 118th Congress by Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV) and Congressman Rudy Yakym (R-IN) in the House of Representatives, and by Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Mark Kelly (D-AZ) in the U.S. Senate. The legislation will establish a new Hospitality and Outdoor-Recreation Supporting Tourism (HOST) program at the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help local communities build resiliency to future economic uncertainties, improve infrastructure for outdoor recreation, and invest in workforce development programs to help fill the nearly 1.2 million open positions in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

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**Tariffs**

Since the beginning of last year, the United States has imposed a variety of new tariffs on global trading partners, and some trading partners have imposed tariffs in response. USTOA/SYTA has some concerns about the financial impact of new tariffs on the ability of Americans to travel abroad and international travelers to travel to the United States.

USTOA/SYTA encourages Congress and the administration to implement trade policies that will make travel easier and encourage both domestic and international travel to the United States.

**Air Traffic Control Modernization**

USTOA/SYTA supports efforts to modernize the nation's air traffic control system to ensure aviation safety and travelers are able to reach their destinations in a timely manner. It is critical that Air Traffic Control towers are appropriately staffed so that air traffic can be properly managed to prevent delays and cancellations.

Ensuring that travelers arrive safely and on time to their destinations is essential to the travel and tourism industry and any flight delays or cancellations have a negative impact on a traveler's plans and ultimately travel businesses.

USTOA/SYTA strongly urges Congress to provide additional funding for Air Traffic Control modernization.

**TSA and FAA Protection in Future DHS and DOT Shutdowns**

USTOA/SYTA strongly supports legislation that would exempt TSA and FAA from future shutdowns and urges Congress to pass such legislation immediately.

**SUPPORT:** the Aviation Funding Solvency Act (H.R.6086). Sponsored in the 119th Congress by Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO), Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), Rep. Troy Nehls (R-TX), Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN). This legislation provides appropriations from the Aviation Insurance Revolving Fund at the rate of operations from the prior fiscal year to prioritize compensation payments for air traffic controllers and to provide funding to FAA in the event of a funding lapse.

**SUPPORT:** the Aviation Funding Stability Act (S.1045). Sponsored in the 119th Congress by Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA). This legislation provides appropriations from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund at the rate of operations from the prior fiscal year to provide funding to FAA in the event of a funding lapse.

**DOT-Aviation Consumer Protection**

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USTOA/SYTA supports common sense consumer protection requirements and has long endorsed regulatory efforts to counter unfair and deceptive behavior by sellers and protect consumers from harmful and abusive business practices.

USTOA/SYTA has generally opposed consumer protection requirements where the underlying justification is based on speculative harm, the asserted public benefits are marginal, and compliance imposes costly and unnecessary burdens on sellers.

While USTOA/SYTA supports the intent of the previous administration's final rule on airline ticket refunds, USTOA/SYTA has urged DOT under the new administration to modify aspects that unfairly expose tour operators to financial insecurity by requiring them to provide refunds before the airline has transferred the consumer's funds to the tour operator.

USTOA/SYTA is committed to ensuring that the ongoing relationships between tour operators, travel agencies, airlines, and other intermediaries result in a net benefit to consumers.

### **Passport Application Processing Delays**

USTOA/SYTA is encouraged by the Department of State's efforts to address the backlog of passport applications following the pandemic. USTOA/SYTA supports a continued push to improve passport processing infrastructure and staffing to prevent another backlog that could impede international travel and tourism.

SUPPORT: Congressional oversight of implementing H.R.6610 – The Passport System Reform and Backlog Prevention Act. Sponsored by Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and co-led by Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA), Rep. María Elvira Salazar (R-FL), and Rep. Nikema Williams (D-GA). The bill addresses structural problems at the Department of State that lead to slow processing of passport applications, while bolstering the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs' processing capabilities to streamline the application and processing experience for American travelers. The legislation was integrated into the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA which became law on December 23, 2024.

### **Visa Processing and Visa Waiver Program**

USTOA/SYTA strongly encourages the Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to expedite visa processing, and expand capacity to handle the significant backlog of visa applications, and associated credentials to increase the flow of tourist traffic into and out of the U.S. Reforms to the visa processing system are necessary to accommodate larger numbers of tourists coming to the U.S., particularly in light of the U.S. hosting several large events in the near future, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Summer Olympics.

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In addition, USTOA/SYTA supports the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and believes that the program not only supports tourism but also strengthens the U.S. national security posture through the various international information sharing agreements contained within the program.

**SUPPORT:** The Visa Improvement, Streamlined Investment, and Tourism Optimization Reform (VISITOR) Act. Sponsored by Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV) and Congresswoman María Elvira Salazar (R-FL) in the 118th Congress (H.R. 7263).

The bill would allow greater flexibility for the Consular Affairs Bureau at the U.S. State Department to use the money collected from passport and visa fees to address the backlog in processing tourist visas at various consular posts overseas.

Key pieces of the VISITOR Act have been included in the recent State Department reauthorization (H.R. 5300) marked up by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

### **Travel Infrastructure**

USTOA/SYTA supports federal legislation that expands and strengthens the economic development of the travel and tourism industry, including support for expedited screening programs such as TSA Pre-Check and Global Entry at airports across the country.

USTOA/SYTA additionally supports maximum REAL ID enforcement flexibility until all U.S. residents can obtain a REAL ID. On May 7, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security began enforcing REAL ID requirements with phased enforcement until a full enforcement deadline of May 7, 2027.

USTOA/SYTA urges Congress to ensure enforcement will not disrupt air travel and to make use of technological advances to strengthen security.