

Exhibitions Day 2016: Issues Brief

1. Stop Online Booking Scams Act of 2016, H.R. 4526

Summary: As the rate of consumers booking travel accommodations online continues to surge, so has the rate of booking scams. In order to better protect consumers, the House has introduced H.R. 4526, which would prohibit websites from pretending to be the hotel and allowing state attorneys general to pursue restitution and refunds on behalf of the victims.

- Upwards of 15 million fraudulent bookings are caused by these scams, resulting in more than \$1.3 billion in lost revenue for hotels and money from consumers.
- As mobile booking continues to increase in popularity, it is much more difficult for consumers to differentiate between the hotel's website and a scam website, making it imperative that legislation is enacted to protect consumers
- Website scams are just one path criminals take; they also employ tactics such as using email solicitation and call centers to carry out their scams
- This bill is a first step, but broadening H.R. 4526's scope now to incorporate email and call center scams ensures the bill gets to the heart of how we can combat this criminal activity
- These scams as a whole contribute to an increased in public distrust of the hospitality and lodging industry, as well as, increased frustration over lost reservations, unexpected charges and fees, incorrect accommodations, lost loyalty benefits

Call to Action: House – Please cosponsor H.R. 4526 Stop Online Booking Scams Act and introduce changes that broaden the bill to also include email and call center scams to best protect consumers and empower the FTC to investigate this growing issue. **Senate** – Please introduce a Senate companion to H.R. 4526 with online, email and call center scam provisions in place and support this legislation.

2. Protecting Workplace Advancement & Opportunity Act, (Overtime Regulation) S.2707 & H.R. 4773

Summary: S.2707/H.R.4773 would block proposed changes to overtime regulation and require the Department of Labor to perform a deeper analysis of the impact potential overtime regulations would have on small businesses, nonprofits, regional economies, local governments and other institutions prior to passing any updates.

- The proposed overtime rule increases the minimum salary level to qualify as exempt from overtime pay requirements to a level that we believe is too high.
- We believe a more accurate approach is to instead align salary requirements to government data and cost-of-living differences.
- The proposed regulation also suggests salary threshold updates every 3 years, a measure we believe will hurt employers by eliminating their ability to attract talent due to an inability to financially cover this increase in overtime qualifiers.
- The December 1 effective date behind these overtime rules is extremely aggressive and does not reflect the time needed to conduct a deeper analysis of its impact on organizers of exhibitions and events, which require working hours well above the traditional eight hours per day.

Call to Action: Senate and House – We ask that you support these pieces of legislation that will prohibit the overtime rule from having any force or effect.

Exhibitions Day 2016: Additional Supporting Messages

Why trade is important to the exhibitions industry

- Because of its importance to the U.S. economy, our focus should be on growing trade activities within our borders to keep us competitive in the import/export market:
 - Creating more opportunities for both foreign and domestic parties to see and test home-grown products and services first hand
 - Balancing opportunities for all parts of the U.S., not just port cities or major financial and consumer travel centers
 - Diversifying where and how we engage in international trade to strengthen the paths that serve our country's best interests
- As of March 2016, the U.S. was importing \$217.1 billion in goods and services, while only exporting \$176.6 billion.
- We're spending nearly \$40.5 billion more on bringing international goods and services into the country, than what we're generating by sending goods and services out.
- Trade fosters the ability to create and maintain the type of commerce needed to ensure we prosper as a competitive America.

Importance of the Trade Show Industry

- Every single city and town in our country has companies that either exhibit or make purchasing decisions at exhibitions and events. That means that every single congressional district in the United States has citizens that benefit from a successful trade show industry.
- The B2B exhibition industry's overall (direct, indirect and induced) contribution to the U.S. GDP in 2015 was \$77 billion. (CEIR)
- The U.S. hosted 11,000 B2B and B2C trade shows in 2015. (2015 CEIR Census Report)
- On average, from Anchorage to Albany, Atlanta to Anaheim there were 30 trade shows and exhibitions taking place every single day. (CEIR)
- Over 33.4 million professionals participated in B2B exhibitions in 2015. (2016 CEIR Index)
- Approximately 1.34 million organizations exhibited at B2B exhibitions in 2015. (2016 CEIR Index Report)