



Exhibitions Day 2017: Issues Brief

Overarching Messaging: Promotion of Fair and Free Trade

- Fair and free trade is vital to the economic health of our country and a critical component to what enables organizations to conduct business whether in boardrooms or in exhibit halls.
- As the backbone of the U.S. GDP, fair and free trade is only possible if travel to the U.S. is properly facilitated and if the U.S. is presented as a suitable and desired destination.
- At the same time, we must ensure that we properly balance the promotion of the U.S. as a desired destination with proper security measures to keep business and leisure travelers safe.
- By facilitating the safety and ease of travel to the U.S., we also ease access of face-to-face business meetings, exhibitions and events, thereby attracting additional investment in the U.S. by domestic and international entities.

Call to Action: *When issues that affect travel facilitation and domestic security come across your desk, we urge you to think about how they also impact the ability of your constituents in [location] to conduct fair and free trade – their ability to buy and sell goods, their access to goods and services, and the opening of new opportunities for their small businesses.*

Supporting Messaging: Enabling Fair and Free Trade Requires Travel Facilitation and a Focus on Safety/Security

1. Travel Facilitation: measures that promote business travel, generating U.S. economic growth and job creation

A. Protecting Brand USA

Overview: President Trump's FY2018 budget proposal calls for the elimination of funding for Brand USA, a federally supported organization that promotes the country overseas as a business and tourist destination.

Our message: Brand USA is a bipartisan program funded by inbound airline passenger fees and private industry, so there is no impact on U.S. taxpayer money. The program's efforts are crucial to attracting international tourism, investment and fair and free trade.

- In 2016, Brand USA was responsible for adding \$8.9 billion to the U.S. economy according to Oxford Economics, a 28-to-1 return on investment.
- Additionally, Brand USA helped to reduce our nation's deficit by \$50 million in 2016 and helped to grow our nation's exports — a stated goal of the president.
- International visitation is the country's No. 2 export and supports 15 million American jobs. That is why it is imperative that programs such as Brand USA receive federal funding

Call to Action: *We urge Congress to oppose any measures to defund Brand USA and recognize reduced funding as a measure that would hurt the health of our economy.*



B. Investing in America: Rebuilding America's Airport Infrastructure Act – H.R. 1265

Overview: According to the World Economic Forum's annual competitiveness report, the U.S. ranks 11th in the world in infrastructure quality.

Our message: The longer this lack of investment goes unaddressed, the more money it is costing our country in lost business revenue

- Without proper travel, housing and dining infrastructure, it is impossible to attract trade shows to your [location]
- H.R. 1265 – Investing in America: Rebuilding America's Airport Infrastructure Act – presents an action that could deliver an immediate and positive impact on infrastructure
 - H.R. 1265 will generate billions of dollars in much-needed revenue by removing an outdated cap on the passenger facility charge (PFC), a fee that has not been changed since 2000 and does not reflect today's inflation rates or capacity needs

Call to Action: *We urge Congress to co-sponsor and support H.R. 1265 and other measures that close the infrastructure investment gap.*

2. Safety and Security: measures that ensure the safety and security of exhibitions and event attendees

A. Industry Security Initiative

Overview: As an industry, we fully support the idea of enhancing safety and security measures to protect our country from potential threats. We believe this requires active dialogue and participation from all parties, not just Congress.

Our message: The International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) and its membership have aligned with the Department of Homeland Security to develop the Exhibitions and Meetings Safety and Security Initiative (EMSSI).

- This initiative will produce a comprehensive security benchmark that aligns with the Department of Homeland Security's SAFETY Act, helping create safer and more secure large-scale events, such as trade shows and exhibitions
- EMSSI is in its final iteration with a targeted completion date of early October. Once completed, we will have hundreds of convention centers requesting certification from the DHS SAFETY Act Office – a significant undertaking that would require immense time and resources.

Call to Action: *As you begin budget talks for FY 2018, please consider the necessary resource needs of the DHS SAFETY Act Office to effectively foster the development and deployment of new anti-terrorism technologies.*

B. Stop Online Booking Scams Act – H.R. 2495 and S. 1164

Overview: 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.

Our message: As the rate of consumers booking travel accommodations online continues to surge, so will the rate of booking scams. There needs to be stronger policy in place to protect consumers from these scams.

- The House and Senate have introduced **H.R. 2495 and S. 1164 – Stop Online Booking Scams Act**, which would prohibit websites from pretending to be the hotel and allow state attorneys general to pursue restitution and refunds on behalf of the victims.
- 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.

Call to Action: *Please co-sponsor and support H.R. 2495 and S. 1164 and empower the FTC to investigate this growing issue.*