

Exhibitions Day 2018: Issues Brief



Overarching Messaging: Create National Economic Prosperity by Enabling Business Deals

- The ability to conduct business, whether in boardrooms or in exhibit halls, is vital to the health of our country and is a critical element to achieving our nation's economic goals.
- The \$91 billion exhibitions industry plays an important role in facilitating these valuable business deals. Issues such as security concerns, decaying infrastructure and hotel booking fraud can impede the success of these imperative face-to-face gatherings.
- Not addressing these challenges will cost the nation and your constituents money over time. The ability to attract and sustain both international and domestic business visitors leads to tax revenue for cities and tax savings for residents.
- As the backbone of the U.S. GDP, fair and free trade is only possible if business travel to the U.S. is properly facilitated and if the U.S. is presented as a suitable and desirable 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 travelers safe.
- In facilitating safety and ease of travel to the U.S., we aid access of face-to-face business meetings, exhibitions and events, thereby attracting additional investment in the U.S. from domestic and international entities.

Call to Action: *When issues that affect business 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 business – 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

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

A. 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: The growing use of online travel reservation sites is only making this market more of a target for cyber criminals. There needs to be stronger policy in place to protect consumers from these scams.

- Last year, the House and Senate introduced **H.R. 2495 and S. 1164 – Stop Online Booking Scams Act**, which would stop hotel booking scams and allow state attorneys general to pursue restitution and refunds on behalf of the victims.
- Currently, these bills are sitting with the House Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. We need the help of our legislators to advance these measures and help us battle this practice of digital theft.

Call to Action: *Please co-sponsor and encourage your fellow Congressmen and women to support H.R. 2495 and S. 1164, so the FTC is empowered to investigate and penalize this growing issue.*

B. 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. Nearly 60 organizations, including over 25 convention centers and CVBs, are already supporting this measure.
- Once the EMSSI initiative is 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: *Please consider the necessary resource needs of the DHS SAFETY Act Office to effectively foster the development and deployment of new anti-terrorism technologies.*

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

A. Advancing the mission of the Visit U.S. Coalition

Overview: From 2015 to 2017, the United States experienced a drop of 7.4 million international visitors. This decrease resulted in a loss of \$32.2 billion in related visitor spending and inhibited the creation of 100,000 American jobs.

Our message: Reversing this decline in U.S. competitiveness and showing “America is open for business” is critical to the health of \$91B exhibitions industry. Embracing policies that enhance the global travel market will enable growth that is crucial to achieving nation's economic goals.

- Travel is a top 10 employer in 49 states, and international travel is the U.S.' #1 service export and #2 export overall.
- The Trump Administration's recently proposed Visa Application rule requiring five years' worth of personal data would have affected nearly 15 million travelers last year – potentially doubling the record drop of international visitors.

Call to Action: *We urge Congress to see business travel as a driver of economic growth and to oppose any measures that could further erode America's market share of international travelers.*

B. Investing in America's Airport Infrastructure

Overview: According to the World Economic Forum, the U.S. ranks ninth in the world in infrastructure quality. Inadequate supply of infrastructure is one of our top 10 most problematic factors for doing business.

Our message: The lack of infrastructure investment in airports is costing the U.S. economy millions in revenue.

- Without proper travel infrastructure, it is extremely challenging to accommodate trade shows to [your state]. To compete with other countries for business travel, significant improvements are needed.
- The \$1.3 trillion omnibus appropriations bill for 2018 includes \$1 billion for new discretionary airport grants for needed improvements. The extra funding in this bill will help, but it can't be leveraged over time in the same way as a dedicated PFC revenue stream. PFC revenue helps to finance large expansion projects that Federal Aviation Administration grants don't cover
- Airports gained more revenue from bag and ticket fees in 2017 than from PFC fees in 2016 and 2017 combined. This is the result of the federal cap on the PFC having not been adjusted since 2000 – 18 years ago.

Call to Action: *We urge Congress to support measures that close the airport infrastructure investment gap.*