

DECEMBER 2025 | QUICK MESSAGING GUIDE

Americans Demand Airport Security Modernization

- A new [U.S. Travel-Ipsos poll](#) confirms the public demands upgrades. 89% of Americans say every dollar of the 9/11 Security Fee—a charge added to every airline ticket that is supposed to fund TSA operations and airport security improvements but is instead largely diverted elsewhere—should fund airport screening improvements.
- Large majorities [support](#) the very reforms TSA is advancing: 80% support keeping shoes on, 73% support leaving laptops in bags and 86% support allowing larger liquids. With 81% backing biometrics at TSA (83% at CBP), travelers are clearly ready for faster, more secure checkpoints—with privacy safeguards.
- Congress has diverted more than \$1.5 billion each year from the security fund since 2014. With America preparing to host the world—from America 250 to the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympic Games—travelers expect Washington to put these dollars back where they belong and deliver a truly modern airport experience.
- Without Congressional action, U.S. airports will lag behind global standards—delaying advancements until 2049.
- The [\\$12.5 billion air traffic control down payment](#) is a strong start, but greater investment is needed to create a more seamless, integrated travel system.

Travel Is Essential

- When travel works smoothly, you hardly notice it—it just works. Disruptions illuminate the need for sustained investment in people, technology and infrastructure that keep travelers moving seamlessly.
- Travel contributes **\$2.9 trillion** in annual economic output, supports **15 million** jobs and generates **\$190 billion** in tax revenue—making it a top driver of growth, stability and prosperity. The sector delivers jobs, economic development and community investment at scale.
- **Travel is essential** to:
 - **Individuals;** because it enhances well-being, fosters lifelong learning and creates meaningful connections to communities and culture—while expanding opportunity and strengthening pride across the country.
 - **Communities;** because travel dollars fund public services and revitalize towns and cities—fostering resilience in rural and urban towns alike.
 - **Businesses;** because it drives economic growth, fuels demand across industries, connects companies to talent and markets and strengthens America’s competitiveness in the global economy.
 - **The Nation;** because it powers the U.S. economy, strengthens global trade and diplomacy and supports infrastructure that enhances security, resilience and America’s global standing.

Vital International Visitors keep America Competitive and Prosperous

- We want international visitors to travel here, have experiences and return home to tell their friends and family to go do the same thing. But we have fallen behind—and recent policy proposals have made the situation harder.
- Overseas visitors matter: They spend an average of **\$4,000 per trip**. Every 1% drop in international spending costs the U.S. **\$1.8 billion in export revenue**.
- The problem in the forefront: the U.S. is predicted to be the only major country facing a decline in international visitor spending in 2025. Overseas arrivals were down 3.1% in October and total international visitation was down 7.2% in October compared to 2024.
- Nowhere is the problem more obvious than with Canada—our closest ally, largest trading partner and top source of international visitors. Through October, Canadian travel to the U.S. is down 23%: over 4 million fewer visits and \$4 billion in lost spending.
- This decline mirrors a larger trend. In just over a decade, the U.S. has gone from a **\$50 billion travel trade surplus** to a projected **\$60+ billion deficit in 2025**—coinciding with the failure to return to record international visitation levels seen in 2018.

We Must Win Back the World's Travelers

The Challenges:

- Six months ago, Congress dealt a blow to our competitiveness when it cut Brand USA's funding by 80%—from \$100 million to \$20 million.
- The new **\$250 'Travel Deterrence Fee'** (the [Visa Integrity Fee](#)) sends the wrong signal: "We do not want you." This 130% increase in upfront visa costs makes the U.S. one of the most expensive destinations for visa-requiring travelers—likely deterring **1 million** visits in 2026 equating to **\$3 billion** in lost spending.
- With CBP's recent proposal asking ESTA applicants to provide their social media from the last 5 years, we're moving in the wrong direction. Screening must protect travelers, but added complexities such as this make the U.S. feel less welcoming—something we cannot afford.
- Visa wait times average 175 days from the top eight non-visa waiver countries in October.

The Opportunity:

- The *VISIT USA Act* would restore critical funding to Brand USA ahead of a decade of events—a smart, bipartisan fix that ensures America competes for travelers on the global stage.
- We are urging lawmakers and the Trump Administration to delay the implementation of the \$250 visa integrity fee indefinitely.
- The administration is deploying hundreds of additional consular officers and staff at high-demand embassies and consulates to speed up visa processing while expediting the visa process for FIFA ticketholders.
- At a moment when the U.S. is preparing to host the world, we need to continue these practical actions and put the U.S. on stronger footing to welcome millions of visitors.