

# Restore Brand USA Funding to Save America's Major Events

## SUPPORT THE VISIT USA ACT

### **What is Brand USA?**

Brand USA is the highly successful public-private partnership created under the bipartisan Travel Promotion Act of 2009. Its mission is to promote America as an international travel destination and communicate official visa and entry policies to help international visitors comply with U.S. immigration laws.

Brand USA increases international travel to the U.S. and grows U.S. travel exports, supports American jobs by driving international travel to rural states and small businesses and returns over \$24 in visitor spending for every \$1 invested.

It's funded solely by travel industry contributions and fees paid by international visitors from Visa Waiver Program countries who use the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). No American taxpayer dollars are used to fund Brand USA.

### **A Crisis Heading into America's Biggest Events**

As the U.S. enters a mega-decade of events, Brand USA stands as a strategic asset—officially partnering with America 250 and the Department of Transportation's Great American Road Trip to welcome the world, boost international travel and showcase the best of America. Fully funding Brand USA is essential for the success of upcoming events—including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, America 250 and the 2028 Olympics—which collectively could bring 40 million visitors and \$100 billion in economic impact.

Yet, international visitation is already down 4.8% through August, and Congress has now made it more expensive to visit the U.S. with increases in visitor visa fees. Without Brand USA fully funded, tens of thousands of American jobs are at risk, and the \$50 billion U.S. travel trade deficit could grow further.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) reduced the federal funding match for Brand USA from up to \$100 million annually to just \$20 million, conflicting with President Trump's FY26 budget request for full funding.

### **The Solution—The VISIT USA Act**

- The \$17 portion of the ESTA fee that was established to fund Brand USA has generated a surplus in the Travel Promotion Fund (TPF) of approximately \$300 million.
- The VISIT USA Act would transfer \$160 million in surplus TPF funds to Brand USA over FY26 and FY27 to help increase visitation to the U.S. for major upcoming events and satisfy President Trump's budget request.
- In this way, the Act simply uses funding that was originally established, collected and intended to support Brand USA.
- The bill would also apply matching requirements in the Travel Promotion Act to the \$160 million, meaning Brand USA would have to provide 1:1 matching industry contributions to receive these dollars.
- Importantly, because TPF funds are derived from ESTA fees collected from foreign visitors, the bill ensures that Brand USA continues to be funded without the use of any American taxpayer dollars.
- This same approach was used to provide emergency funding to Brand USA in 2022 after COVID-19 decimated ESTA fee collections (see Division FF of P.L. 117-103).