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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, AND THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO INCLUDE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IN THE VISA WAIVER PROGRAM.

1           WHEREAS, there are nearly two million Americans of Korean  
2 heritage and descent who live in the United States, including  
3 forty thousand Hawaii residents, and January 13, 2003 marked the  
4 centennial of the first arrival of Koreans in the United States;  
5 and

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7           WHEREAS, the United States and the Republic of Korea have a  
8 long history of friendship, and continue to strengthen alliances  
9 and business partnerships; and

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11           WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea has been a trusted ally for  
12 over fifty years, is a major trading partner of the United  
13 States, and is the thirteenth largest economy in the world; and

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15           WHEREAS, visitors from the Republic of Korea to the United  
16 States reached as high as 500,000 in 1999, inclusive of the  
17 40,000 visitors to Hawaii that same year; and

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19           WHEREAS, the Visa Waiver Program was established in 1986  
20 with the objective of promoting better relations with United  
21 States allies, eliminating unnecessary barriers to travel, and  
22 stimulating the tourism industry; and

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24           WHEREAS, the Visa Waiver Program enables nationals of  
25 twenty-seven countries to travel to the United States for  
26 tourism or business for stays of ninety days or less without  
27 obtaining a visa; the Republic of Korea is not a participant in  
28 the Visa Waiver Program; and

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30           WHEREAS, due to increased security prompted by the  
31 terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, it has become much more  
32 difficult for the citizens of the Republic of Korea, especially  
33 those living outside the capital city of Seoul, to obtain  
34 visitor visas that allow travel to the United States; and



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2 WHEREAS, under Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11  
3 Commission Act of 2007, the United States Congress revised  
4 requirements for countries to become eligible for the Visa  
5 Waiver Program, enabling South Korea to be eligible for  
6 consideration, provided it meets the new security requirements  
7 specified in the Act; and

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9 WHEREAS, in a letter to the Secretary of State dated July  
10 7, 2006, United States Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K.  
11 Akaka, along with several other senators, expressed strong  
12 support for including South Korea into the Visa Waiver Program  
13 and noted that South Korea has repealed its visa requirement for  
14 United States citizens traveling to the Republic of Korea for  
15 thirty days or less and that South Korea enjoys a visa-free  
16 status with sixty-six other nations; and

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18 WHEREAS, including South Korea in the Visa Waiver Program  
19 would result in economic benefits to the United States estimated  
20 to be \$350,000,000 in actualized tourism revenues for every  
21 100,000 tourists increase in South Korean visitors and tourists,  
22 based on visitors and tourists to the United States from South  
23 Korea spending of nearly \$2,200,000,000 in 2004; and

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25 WHEREAS, while the Republic of Korea is doing its part to  
26 facilitate the processing of travel requirements for its  
27 citizens, the United States should also encourage visitors from  
28 the Republic of Korea, especially as Hawaii continues to be one  
29 of the premier destinations in the world and tourism remains the  
30 backbone of Hawaii's economy; now, therefore,

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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
33 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
34 Session of 2008, that the President of the United States, the  
35 Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Homeland Security are  
36 urged to take all steps necessary to include the Republic of  
37 Korea in the Visa Waiver Program; and

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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of Hawaii's  
40 congressional delegation are urged to support the inclusion of  
41 the Republic of Korea in the Visa Waiver Program; and

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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
44 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States,



1 the Secretary of State, the Secretary for Homeland Security,  
2 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United  
3 States House of Representatives, the members of Hawaii's  
4 congressional delegation, and the Governor.

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OFFERED BY: *Rida F. Cabanilla*

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