
HOUSE CONCURRENT 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



1 difficult for the citizens of the Republic of Korea, especially
2 those living outside the capital city of Seoul, to obtain
3 visitor visas that allow travel to the United States; and
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5 WHEREAS, under Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11
6 Commission Act of 2007, the United States Congress revised
7 requirements for countries to become eligible for the Visa Waiver
8 Program, enabling South Korea to be eligible for consideration,
9 provided it meets the new security requirements specified in the
10 Act; and
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12 WHEREAS, in a letter to the Secretary of State dated July 7,
13 2006, United States Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K.
14 Akaka, along with several other senators, expressed strong
15 support for including South Korea into the Visa Waiver Program
16 and noted that South Korea has repealed its visa requirement for
17 United States citizens traveling to the Republic of Korea for
18 thirty days or less and that South Korea enjoys a visa-free
19 status with sixty-six other nations; and
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21 WHEREAS, including South Korea in the Visa Waiver Program
22 would result in economic benefits to the United States estimated
23 to be \$350,000,000 in actualized tourism revenues for every
24 100,000 tourists increase in South Korean visitors and tourists,
25 based on visitors and tourists to the United States from South
26 Korea spending of nearly \$2,200,000,000 in 2004; and
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28 WHEREAS, while the Republic of Korea is doing its part to
29 facilitate the processing of travel requirements for its
30 citizens, the United States should also encourage visitors from
31 the Republic of Korea, especially as Hawaii continues to be one
32 of the premier destinations in the world and tourism remains the
33 backbone of Hawaii's economy; now, therefore,
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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
36 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
37 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the President of
38 the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of
39 Homeland Security are urged to take all steps necessary to
40 include the Republic of Korea in the Visa Waiver Program; and
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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of Hawaii's
43 congressional delegation are urged to support the inclusion of
44 the Republic of Korea in the Visa Waiver Program; and



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Secretary for Homeland Security, President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of Hawaii's congressional delegation, and the Governor.

OFFERED BY: John T. F. Asoanilla

FEB 21 2008

