

# VISIT USA Act of 2011

Further Opening Hawaii's Shores to the World



Congresswoman Mazie K. Hirono  
Hawaii - 2nd District



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## Importance of Tourism to Hawaii *The State's Main Economic Engine*



*Photo Courtesy HVCB/Bernadette Heath*

### Hawaii in 2010

- **152,864** visitor related jobs
- Represents **17%-19%** of *all* Hawaii Jobs



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## Importance of Tourism to Hawaii *The State's Main Economic Engine*

### Hawaii in 2010

- Visitors spent **\$11.4 billion**
- Created **\$1.1 billion** in total tax revenue





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## Asia-Pacific: Harnessing New Visitors

- Asia-Pacific: Home to **55% of world's economic activity**
  - 2.7 billion consumers
  - 6 of top 10 U.S. trading partners





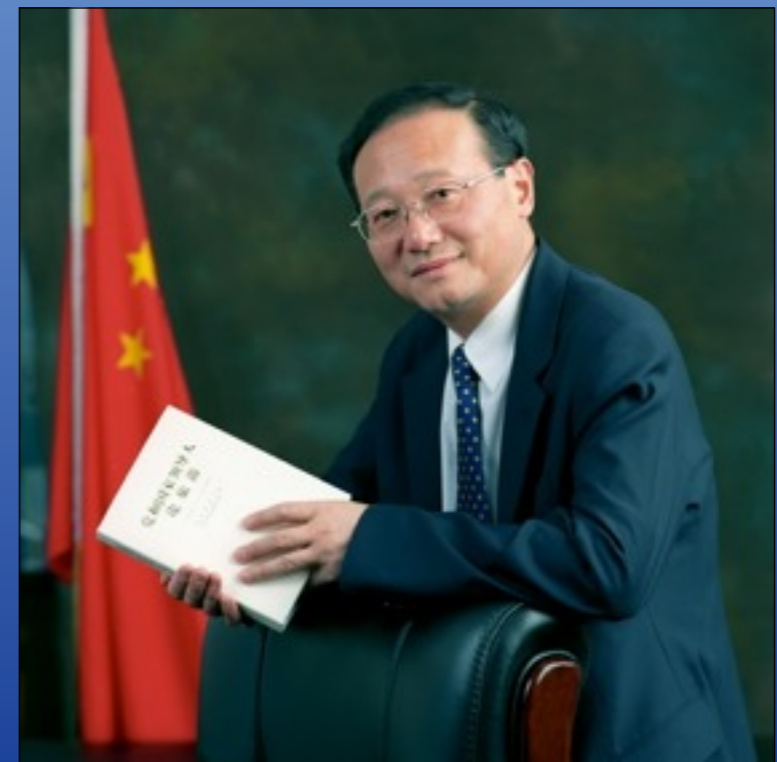
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## What the experts are saying:

### **Qiwei Shao, China National Tourism Administration**

If visa restrictions were loosened and direct flights increased, the U.S. could see 5 million visitors from China.

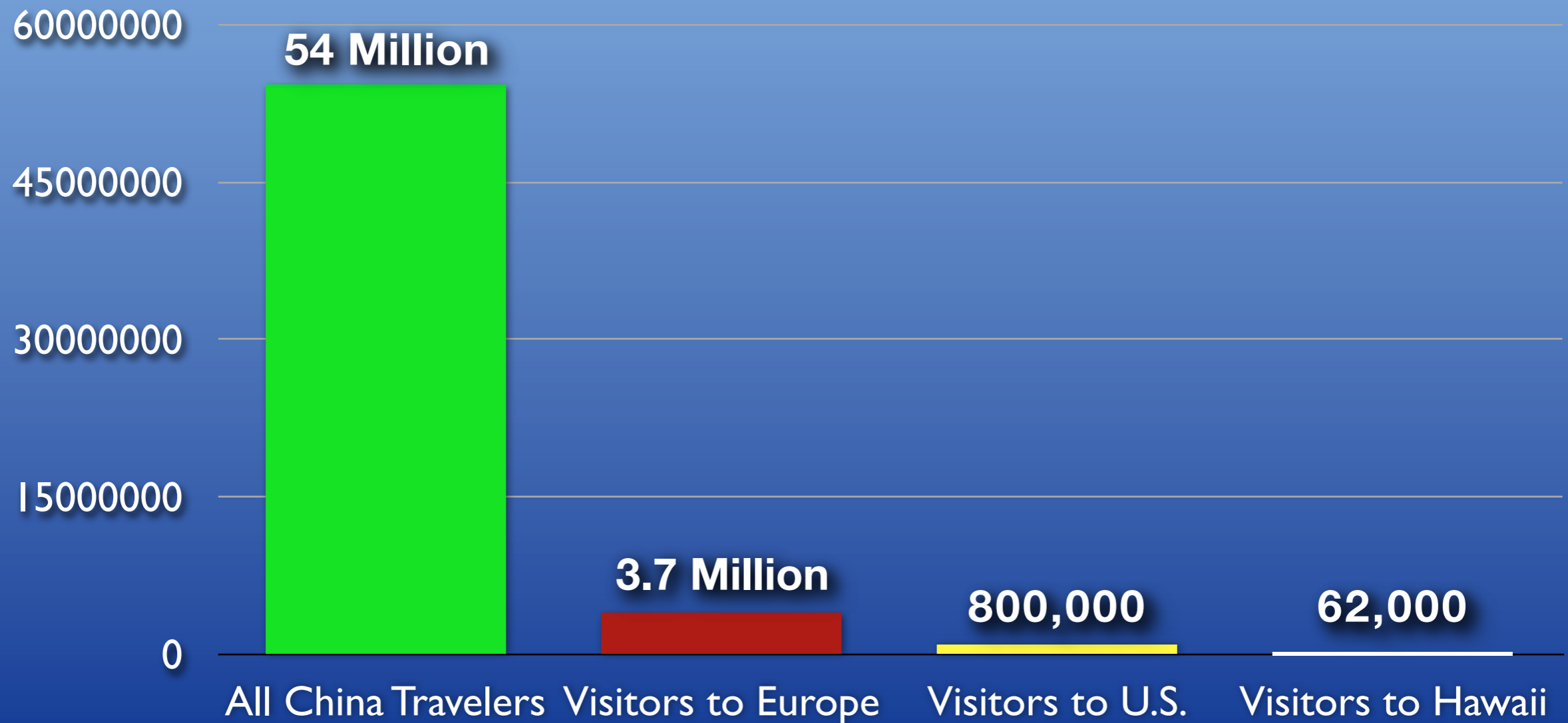




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## Where are they headed? China Traveler Destinations

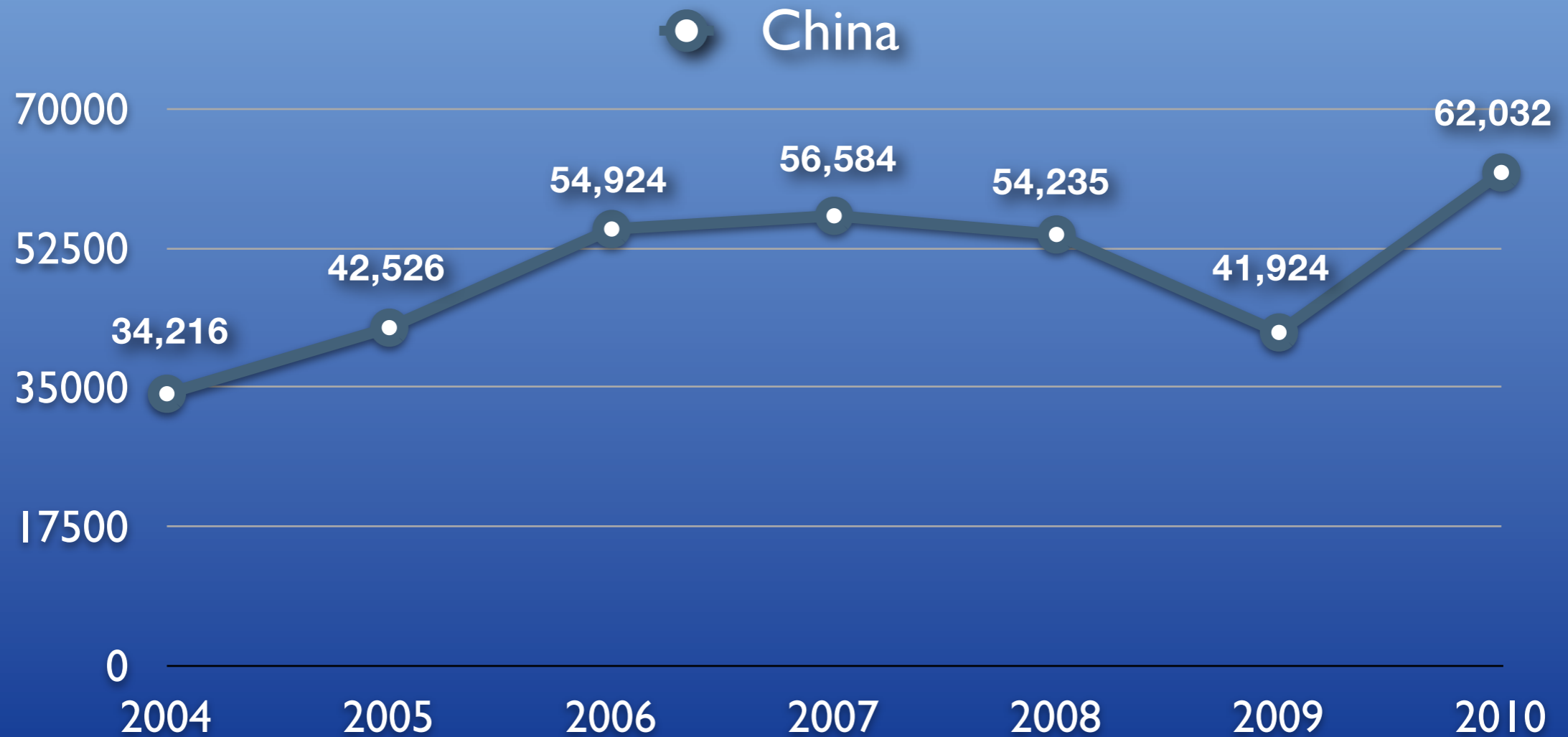




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## Riding the Wave of Growth: Increased Numbers of Visitors 2004-2010





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## The Pursuit of Visa Reform: South Korea Success

- 1997 - Then-Lt. Governor Hirono testifies before U.S. Senate urging South Korean visa waivers.
- August 2007 - New law allows South Korea to join U.S. visa waiver program. Growth has been steady since.





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## Riding the Wave of Growth: Increased Numbers of Visitors 2004-2010





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## VISIT USA Act of 2011

### General Overview

- 5-year multiple entry visas for Chinese Nationals
- Creates “Canadian Retiree Visa” to encourage more visitors





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## VISIT USA Act of 2011

### General Overview

- Establishes premium visa processing
- Allows State Department to lower fees during off-seasons to attract more visitors
- Videoconference pilot program





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## VISIT USA Act of 2011

### Projected Economic Impact for Hawaii\*

- **286,750 Chinese visitors**  
to Hawaii by 2015\*



\*Projection provided by Dr. James Mak, professor emeritus of economics, Univ. of Hawaii. Based on whether the number of visitors to the U.S. equals Europe.



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### Projected Economic Impact for Hawaii\*



- **\$573.5 million**  
in Chinese  
visitor spending\*

\*Projection provided by Dr. James Mak, professor emeritus of economics, Univ. of Hawaii. Based on whether the number of visitors to the U.S. equals Europe.



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## VISIT USA Act of 2011

### Projected Economic Impact for Hawaii\*



- With multiplier effect, China tourism to generate close to \$1 billion in business sales

\*Projection provided by Dr. James Mak, professor emeritus of economics, Univ. of Hawaii. Based on whether the number of visitors to the U.S. equals Europe.



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What the experts are saying:

**Mike McCartney, CEO Hawaii Tourism Authority**

“The VISIT USA Act is great news... In fact, using estimates from the U.S. Department of Commerce, we could see potentially 6,000 new jobs created in Hawai’i as a result of the reforms in the VISIT USA Act.”





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## What the experts are saying:

### **Roy Yamaguchi, Brand USA Board Member**



“I applaud efforts like the VISIT USA Act and other proposals to facilitate travel to the United States. With Brand USA promoting the greatest destination in the world, efforts to increase the ability of travelers to come here allows us to achieve great things for the U.S. economy.”





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## VISIT USA Act's Strong Support

This bipartisan bill has been endorsed by:



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