

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 7, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Due to the progress our country has made to defeat COVID-19, we respectfully urge your administration to begin taking science-based, data-driven steps to safely reopen international travel to the United States.

Recent data and scientific studies show that a safe reopening of international travel to the U.S. is within reach. More than 50% of American adults are now fully vaccinated, with the potential for 70% of Americans above the age of 12 to be fully vaccinated by July 2021. The number of new infections and COVID-related deaths have declined significantly within the last 30 days.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said that it is safe for fully vaccinated individuals to safely resume many activities, including travel.² Similarly, scientific studies have shown that the inbound international testing requirement, federal mask mandate, state-of-the-art air filtration systems onboard aircraft, and other layered protections have also significantly reduced the likelihood that international travelers will carry or transmit the virus.³

With science and data continuing to lead the way, it is now possible to plan for and begin a safe reopening on international travel to the U.S. There are several steps that your administration can take in the near term, including:

- **Reopening the land border and restarting air travel between the U.S. and Canada.** More than 59 percent of the Canadian population has received at least one dose of the vaccine and the number of fully vaccinated Canadians is expected to increase rapidly as vaccine supply grows over the coming weeks.⁴ The efficacy of vaccines has prompted the Canadian COVID-19 Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel to issue guidance recommending that government-mandated quarantines for fully vaccinated travelers be discontinued and that border restrictions evolve to reflect improving conditions.⁵ Similarly, guidance from the CDC is clear that fully vaccinated travelers may safely resume travel.⁶ Evidence overwhelmingly suggests that vaccines are working and pre-

¹ https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrendscases

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html>

³ <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2021-06-02-01/>

⁴ <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccination-coverage/>

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/testing-screening-advisory-panel/reports-summaries/priority-strategies-quarantine-borders.html#a1>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

departure Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing can effectively mitigate risk. Both governments should follow the science and drop all travel restrictions for travelers between the United States and Canada who are fully vaccinated travelers or provide proof of a negative PCR test.

- **Develop a risk-based, data-driven roadmap to ease inbound entry restrictions:** Similar to our global competitors, the administration can develop a science-based, data-driven roadmap to lift international entry restrictions issued under 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. We appreciate your Administration's recent announcement that expert working groups will provide recommendations for safely reopening international travel. The data and science show that the right tools are now in place to mitigate risk and safely begin to ease international entry restrictions, particularly as vaccination rates here in the U.S. reach a saturation point. We encourage these working groups to provide recommendations as soon as possible.
- **Lifting 212(f) for the United Kingdom (U.K.) and Reestablishing Travel Between the U.S. and the United Kingdom (U.K.):** The U.K. and the U.S. have similar vaccination rates, and travel between the two countries can be extremely low risk provided that travelers are vaccinated or can produce a negative PCR test prior to boarding a flight. New research from the Mayo Clinic shows the risk of a person infected with COVID-19 boarding a flight from the UK to the U.S. is 1 out of 10,000. The same research shows that the risk of an infected passenger transmitting the virus to another passenger flying from the UK to the U.S. is even lower at 1 out of 1 million passengers.
- **Clarify and broaden the National Interest Exemption:** Clarify the National Interest Exemption to allow travelers from 212(f) countries to enter the U.S. provided that the trip meets a clear definition for being in the national economic or security interests of the U.S.
- **Increase visa processing capacity for tourism and business visas:** As of April 8, 2021, just 57 of 237 visa processing sites were fully operational and 76% of consulates are either fully or partially closed to routine visa processing.⁷ There must be a clear plan and timeline to increase visa processing capacity in order to fully reopen international travel and global commerce.

By taking these steps, your administration can both protect public health and safety, and accelerate economic recovery and rehiring in the hard-hit travel industry.

Prior to the pandemic, international inbound travel to the U.S. contributed \$234 billion in export income to the U.S. economy, generated a trade surplus of \$51 billion, and directly supported 1.2 million American jobs. However, the steep decline in travel in 2020 resulted in the loss of \$150

⁷ <https://www.cato.org/blog/76-consulates-are-fully-or-partly-closed-even-after-tests-vaccinations>

billion in export income. If nothing is done to lift entry restrictions, the U.S. is projected to lose 1.1 million jobs and an additional \$175 billion by the end of this year.

We look forward to working with you in a bipartisan way on these efforts, and we remain hopeful that all pandemic-related travel restrictions can soon be lifted to jumpstart our nation's economic recovery, restore American jobs and reconnect our country to the world.

Sincerely,



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress




Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



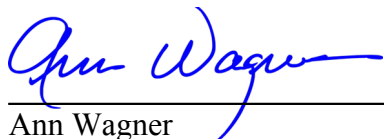
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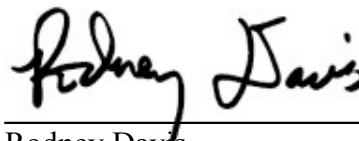
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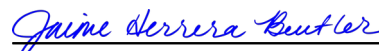
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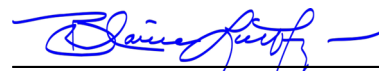
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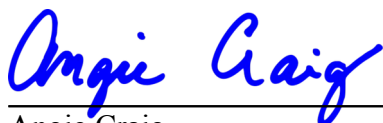
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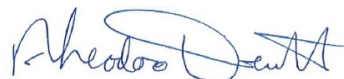
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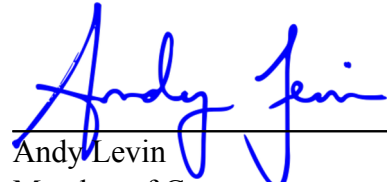
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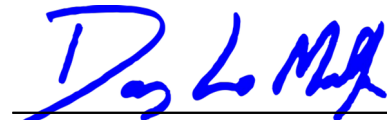
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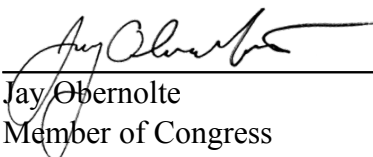
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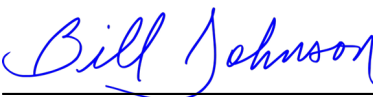
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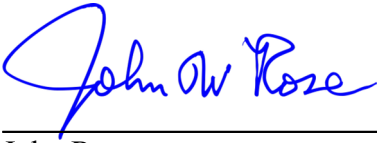
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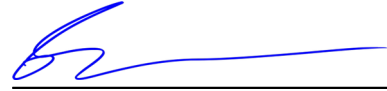
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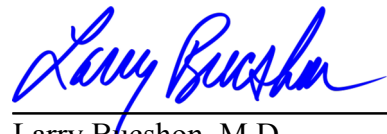
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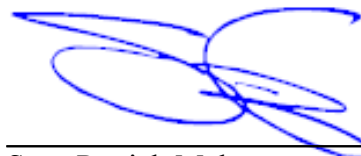
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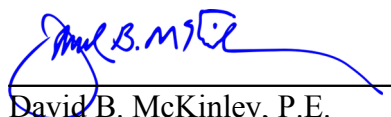
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