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Statement for the Record  
House Ways and Means Select Revenue Subcommittee Hearing on  
Tax Reform and Foreign Investment in the United States  
June 23, 2011

Today's hearing focuses on the role of foreign direct investment in expanding the U.S. economy and creating jobs for American workers. While that has been primarily focused on the tax environment for foreign investors, I want to call my colleagues' attention to the value that foreign visitors bring to the U.S. economy each year.

Countless reports have shown how the travel industry bolsters job creation here at home. According to the U.S. Travel Association, inbound travel to the U.S. currently supports 1.8 million U.S. jobs and more than \$134 billion in direct travel spending in the United States. Overseas visitors spend on average \$4000 in the U.S. per visit, so if we can increase the number of visitors to the U.S. each year, we will create even more jobs and further strengthen our economy.

There are several easy ways we can increase the number of foreign travelers to the United States, at little or no cost to U.S. taxpayers, including reducing visa interview wait times, improving planning at our consular offices around the world and expanding the Visa Waiver Program. There are numerous countries around the globe that are eager to send more visitors to the U.S. each year, but we simply lack the consular staff and visas to allow them all to come here. Shame on us. We should never be turning visitors away, and certainly not in this economy. We should be welcoming them, as they are a boon to our public diplomacy efforts, a boon to our economy and a boon to our working families who need jobs and a secure economic future.