

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

June 7, 2016

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Thompson:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports H.R. 5253, the "Strong Visa Integrity Secures America Act of 2016."

The Chamber applauds the Committee for focusing on the important issue of national security as it pertains to the visa granting process. The Chamber was pleased to see the inclusion of commonsense measures in the bill, such as the provisions to ensure that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials scan electronic passports of individuals at U.S. airports when they seek to enter the country, additional clarification on proper vetting procedures, and new oversight requirements for DHS to provide more information to the public on visa overstays.

The Chamber was also pleased with the focus of the bill's sponsors on potential risks to the country. This approach is reflected throughout the bill, whether it concerns the placement of Homeland Security personnel at diplomatic and consular posts around the world, performing visa security assistance remotely, or the new requirements for CBP to conduct continuous screening of individuals seeking to enter the U.S. Putting the focus on risks to our national security is the proper approach for Congress to take. This proposal would provide the necessary parameters for DHS to focus on its mission to secure the homeland, while providing the agency with the needed flexibility to address threats to the U.S. as they arise.

Lastly, the Chamber appreciates the Committee's approach to the issue of visa security advisory opinions. The creation of the Visa Security Advisory Opinion Unit that would respond to State Department requests strikes the right balance between the need for the government to perform its due diligence in ensuring that security threats are kept out of the U.S. and allowing the State Department and DHS to focus their time and effort on potential threats to the nation, as opposed to requiring additional screening on individuals simply based upon their home country or other arbitrary criteria. This approach would not only advance national security efforts, but it

would do so in a way that allows the executive branch agencies to make the best use of their limited resources.

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve the federal government's ability to defend the nation from national security threats. The Chamber looks forward to working with the members of the Committee on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Committee on Homeland Security