

# WebMemo



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## Visa Waiver Reform: The Heritage Foundation's Research

*The Heritage Foundation*

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) today allows visa-free travel between the U.S. and 27 countries for up to 90 days. It has not been expanded since 9/11, however, out of concern that terrorists, criminals, and immigration violators might exploit the opportunity to enter the U.S. and remain unlawfully. But restricting casual travel with many countries that seek stronger ties to America has hurt the U.S. economy, diminished America's image abroad, and actually foreclosed one method of encouraging friends and allies to adopt stronger security procedures.

### **Visa Waiver Reform: Time for Action**

*The Honorable George V. Voinovich*

June 18, 2007

[www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl1032.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl1032.cfm)

Speaking on the pressing need for visa waver reform, Senator Voinovich details the history of the program and the implication of expanding it for increased security, public diplomacy, and economic competitiveness.

### **Visa Reform: How to Be Brave in a Brave New World**

*Helle C. Dale and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

March 22, 2007

[www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed040207b.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed040207b.cfm)

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Americans became rightly concerned about two serious issues—thwarting the international travel

of terrorists and getting serious about enforcing U.S. immigration laws. Most of what was done immediately after 9/11 amounted to simply making it more difficult to travel to the United States from overseas. While such caution was certainly understandable, this approach isn't sustainable over the long term.

### **Improve the Visa Waiver Program with Exit Checks for New Participants**

*James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., Helle C. Dale, and James Dean*  
March 19, 2007

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/wm1400.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/wm1400.cfm)

The House and Senate recently passed bills that would implement a number of new homeland security measures. A key provision of the Senate's bill that would strengthen and enhance the Visa Waiver Program should be improved in conference by requiring visitors from countries entering to "check out" at major U.S. international airports when they leave the country. With this requirement in place, the Department of Homeland Security could ensure that foreign visitors are complying with U.S. immigration law.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:  
[www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/wm1552.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/wm1552.cfm)

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Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

**Visa Reform***Helle C. Dale*

January 25, 2007

[www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed012507a.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed012507a.cfm)

Our allies and partners will continue to need access to the opportunities the United States has to offer. If we fail to grasp this, the beneficiary of their talents and energy will be the European Union and Australia. And in the long war against terrorism, the United States will continue to need allies and partners. For these reasons, Congress must expand the Visa Waiver Program.

**President's Proposed Visa Waiver Program Reforms Strengthen Fight Against Terror***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D. and Laura Keith*

November 30, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1268.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1268.cfm)

This article details why the President's initiative to reform the Visa Waiver Program will result in better, more flexible security standards for our nation and participating nations while at the same time facilitating beneficial trade and bolstering public diplomacy.

**New Evidence for a New Visa Waiver Policy***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

September 18, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1217.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1217.cfm)

The Bush Administration should move quickly to implement the GAO's recommendations for improving the Visa Waiver Program. In addition, the Administration and Congress should expand the program to bring more like-minded nations into a secure regime that makes traveling between free nations faster and easier and helps impede the travel of terrorists and criminals.

**The Visa Process: Strategic Direction for a 21st Century System***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

September 13, 2005

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/tst091305a.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/tst091305a.cfm)

Testifying before Congress, Dr. James Jay Carafano outlines a series of recommendations for a safer and more effective visa process. Central to this strategy is an expanded Visa Waiver Program.

**Rethinking VISA Policy for the 21st Century***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

August 8, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1191.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1191.cfm)

Here, Dr. James Jay Carafano outlines the historical underpinnings, implications, and functions of an expanded Visa Waiver Program, which include spurring tourism and economic investment, rewarding U.S. allies, ensuring reciprocal trade benefits, and mitigating national security and immigration risks.

**A Visa Reform Plan for Congress***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

June 25, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em1001.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em1001.cfm)

Since 9/11, Congress has done far too little to encourage foreign visitors to come to the United States. Foreign travel to America has still not recovered to pre-9/11 levels, and congressional inaction threatens to undermine the competitiveness of U.S. society. By developing an action plan to speed the process of issuing visas and expanding the Visa Waiver Program, Congress can both reestablish America's reputation as an open and welcoming country and make the nation more secure against foreign threats.

**Wayward Thinking***Helle C. Dale*

June 8, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed060806a.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed060806a.cfm)

As currently configured, the Visa Waiver Program has helped foster anti-American sentiment in countries that do not qualify and presents problems for governments that want to remain allies of the United States in the global war on terror. For these and other reasons, the program should be expanded.

**Visa Waiver Initiative in Senate Immigration Bill Falls Short***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

May 31, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1099.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm1099.cfm)

Since 9/11, nothing has been done to expand the Visa Waiver Program as an effective way of both facilitating travel and frustrating the efforts of terrorists seeking to enter the United States. An amendment to “The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006” (S. 2611) attempted to address this failure but falls short.

**Road Maps for Visa Waiver Program Lead Nowhere***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

February 17, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em993.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em993.cfm)

In February 2005, President George W. Bush announced his intention to establish “road maps” for countries interested in participating in the United States Visa Waiver Program. Nine European countries that do not currently participate in the VWP are working with the United States to develop road maps. The road maps are a good first step, but they are not sufficient to meet U.S. economic and security concerns. Congress needs to give the Administration authority to negotiate more aggressive plans for VWP expansion.

**With a Little Help from Our Friends: Enhancing Security by Expanding the Visa Waiver Program***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.*

February 3, 2006

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em991.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/em991.cfm)

Protecting America and promoting economic growth and freedom require international partnerships that serve mutual interests. The Visa Waiver Program is one example. The VWP enhances security by setting common standards and promotes economic growth and cultural ties. Congress should use the VWP more effectively by giving the Department of Homeland Security broader authority to expand the program to other countries.

**Including South Korea in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program***Balbina Y. Hwang, Ph.D.*

July 25, 2005

[www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/bg1872.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/bg1872.cfm)

Most Americans would be surprised to learn that one of the most troublesome issues for South Korean citizens with the United States is not growing tensions about North Korea’s illicit nuclear weapons program but that the Republic of Korea is not included in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.

**Building the Alliance for Freedom: An Agenda for Improving and Expanding the Visa Waiver Program***James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Richard Weitz, Ph.D.*

May 6, 2005

[www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg1850.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg1850.cfm)

Homeland security is really a cooperative effort that enables nations to serve their mutual interests and protect their citizens—as well as the global economic lifelines that carry the free flow of goods, services, peoples, and ideas—against the threat of transnational terrorism. Strengthening the international instruments that help to achieve this goal has to be a U.S. priority. One important tool is the Visa Waiver Program.