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E Visas for New Zealand Bring Jobs and Investment to the U.S.

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Businesses from around the world trade with the U.S. and often make substantial direct investments in the U.S. These businesses bring money into the U.S., create U.S. jobs, and strengthen trade and diplomatic ties between the U.S. and foreign nations. One way to support this mutually beneficial activity is to provide E-1 trader visas and E-2 investor visas to individuals from friendly foreign nations who are interested in expanding their businesses' trade with or investment in the U.S.

New Zealand is one such nation that deserves access to E visas that grow and support the U.S. economy. Congress should rally behind this common-sense, nonpartisan issue and allow it to advance without getting wrapped up in the contentious immigration debate.

E Visas Support Economic Growth. E visas are nonimmigrant visas provided for up to two years to citizens of a foreign nation. E-1 visas provide traders with access to the U.S. in order to further the trade between the U.S. and the trader's nation. To qualify for an E-1 visa, these traders must carry on substantial trade with the U.S., with at least 50 percent of the volume of their trade being between the U.S. and their nation.

Similarly, E-2 visas give foreign investors entry into the U.S. for the purpose of seeking to develop and direct a substantial investment in a U.S. company. These investors must have at least 50 percent ownership of a U.S. enterprise or otherwise control a company. Both E-1 and E-2 visas also allow critical employees of the original E-visa holders to also seek E visas themselves in order to support the trade and investment objectives of their employers.

The U.S. has extended E visas to dozens of nations around the world, granting over 50 nations access to E-1 visas and over 80 nations access to E-2 visas. Most of these nations are partners and friends of the U.S. As a result, these nations are sending businesspeople to the U.S. to expand trade with the U.S. and directly invest in the U.S., creating jobs and economic growth.

New Zealand, however, has not yet been given the same opportunity that its neighbors (such as Brunei, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand) have been afforded.

New Zealand: A Friend and Partner. With growing military cooperation, economic trade, and diplomatic ties, New Zealand is a superb candidate for E visas. Strategically, New Zealand is an important intelligence partner and has supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan as well as nonproliferation and peacekeeping efforts around the world. New Zealand is also a close collaborator in diplomatic efforts, seeking security and economic growth in the Pacific region in multilateral settings such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

Economically, the U.S. is New Zealand's third-largest source of imports, as well as the third-largest export market, driving New Zealand's desire to gain

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greater access to the U.S. markets through E visas.¹ New Zealand is also the U.S.'s 52nd-largest export market, which puts it ahead of many of the other nations that have access to E visas.² New Zealand already provides U.S. businesspeople with three months of visa-free travel to New Zealand as well as other friendly visa policies. Furthermore, New Zealand is firmly committed to the principles of economic freedom, with a rating of “free” in The Heritage Foundation’s *2014 Index of Economic Freedom*, coming in as the fifth-freest nation in the world.

Next Steps for Congress. Given the benefits of E visas to the U.S. and New Zealand’s status as a strong U.S. partner, Congress should:

- **Extend E-1 and E-2 visas to New Zealand.** The State Department should then develop the procedures that will allow appropriate New Zealand businesspeople to easily obtain E visas.
- **Reject an all-or-nothing approach.** E visa issues are focused on bringing investment and jobs into the U.S. and strengthening America’s

relationships with other nations. E visas are nonimmigrant visas and, thus, should not be included in Congress’s massive comprehensive immigration efforts. Rather, this policy should be advanced on its own merits, especially since it is of clear benefit to the U.S. and is not a partisan or sensitive issue.

E Visas for New Zealand Are Win-Win. New Zealand is a trusted partner that is strongly connected to U.S. in strategic and economic affairs. Giving New Zealand businesspeople access to E visas would allow for greater trade with and greater investment in the U.S. economy, creating jobs and spurring economic growth. Congress should advance this policy on its own merits and grant New Zealand access to mutually beneficial E visas.

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1. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “United States of America,” <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Countries/North-America/United-States.php> (accessed January 23, 2014).

2. Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, “New Zealand,” <http://www.ustr.gov/countries-regions/southeast-asia-pacific/new-zealand> (accessed January 23, 2014).