

This is one from India. "One special reason to visit India in 2009," it says. "Any time is a good time to visit the Land of Taj, but there is no time like now."

This is one of the many from Australia. I think all of us have seen ads about Australia. "Arrived with a thousand things on our minds; departed without a care in the world." Another from Australia which obviously features the great diving they have. Just the visual image makes you say: I think I would like to go there. I think I would like to experience that on my next vacation.

This is Ireland, a nice simple map of Ireland talking about all the various things they have, from golf and the St. Patrick's center to other places to visit in Ireland. It gives a nice visual image.

Well, there are not only brochures but television advertising, the Internet, and all kinds of ways to get into a person's mind about why they would want to come and visit someplace, and all we are saying is we need to do this for the United States. There are so many incredible places we have here to visit that selling is not going to be the problem, it is just going to be making the effort.

So, Mr. President, I believe this is legislation that is worth doing. Some folks have come down here to say we don't need to do this because we already have a lot of travelers coming to the United States as it is. International travel to the United States, they say, is up. Well, the problem is, when you measure international travel coming from Mexico and Canada, that may be up, but they only spend about \$900 each visit when they come here. Overseas travelers spend about \$4,500 each visit when they come here, and that travel is down in the United States. It is down significantly compared to the rest of the world. So this is legislation that we need to go after those overseas travelers who have money to spend. This is something that can benefit States all across America. It will benefit the Federal Treasury, and it will create jobs.

There are a lot of good things about this legislation, and I think that is why you will see a good, strong bipartisan vote when the final vote tally is taken about 4:30 today.

So I would encourage people to take a good, hard look at this. At a time when we need jobs—jobs, jobs, jobs—this is a bill that can help deliver some of those jobs.

#### RECESS

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we recess until 2:15 p.m. as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARDIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

#### TRAVEL PROMOTIONS ACT OF 2009—Continued

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, we are going through a travel and tourism bill. I know my leader is coming to say some words on the Senate floor, but I had a couple questions the authors of the bill have not answered satisfactorily. One is they create a new corporation for travel promotion and they create a new travel and advisory board, but there is already a travel and advisory board within the Commerce Department. There is nothing in this bill that eliminates this duplicative function that is already there. If, in fact, the intent of the bill is to promote, as they say it is, travel and tourism, one of the things we do not want to do is have duplicative agencies doing exactly the same thing, wasting the taxpayers' money. It is about \$67 million that will go down the drain if, in fact, we do not eliminate the duplicative section of this bill.

The second point I would make is you are going to spend \$12 million a year just on this one advisory board. The third point I will make refers to a letter from the European Union noticing that the visa fees we plan on placing with this bill will cause a negative reaction from them and a reciprocal institution of visa fees through the European Union.

I make those points and hope the authors of the bill will answer, for the American people, the \$67 million waste in this bill that is going to occur if they do not eliminate programs that are already out there for which they are creating duplicate agencies.

I yield the floor and ask unanimous consent to have the letter printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JUNE 18, 2009.

Hon. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,  
*Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM SECRETARY, As you are most certainly aware, the U.S. Travel Promotion Act is currently under consideration in Congress (S.1023). On 16 June 2009, the Senate voted 90:3 for the bill to proceed and a final vote is expected any day now. If this bill were to enter into force, DHS would be required to ask travellers to the U.S. upon their application for an Electronic (System for) Travel Authorization (ESTA) to pay at least \$10 which would be used to finance a

Travel Promotion Fund as well as the operational costs of ESTA.

We are concerned that this draft legislation is not compatible with our common goal to facilitate transatlantic trade and travel. We believe it would constitute a step backwards in our joint endeavour to ease transatlantic mobility. This fee is likely to discourage the use of ESTA well in advance of travel, thereby undermining the security objectives of the system. Moreover, it risks being perceived as a visa fee in disguise and would lead to calls for the European Commission to re-examine the issue of whether the ESTA is tantamount to a visa or not, with potentially negative implications on reciprocal visa-free travel between the EU and the U.S. Besides, taxing foreign travellers to promote tourism seems peculiar and public perceptions might lead to less, not more travel to the U.S.

We understand that the Administration also has concerns with this bill. We would therefore urge you to make your formal position known to Congress, so as to avoid the passing of legislation which may unnecessarily deter legitimate transatlantic travel for business and tourism.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to further strengthening transatlantic relations in the years to come.

Sincerely,

PETR KOLÁŘ,  
*Ambassador, Czech Republic.*

JOHN BRUTON,  
*Ambassador, European Commission.*

PONTUS F JÄRBORG,  
*Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Sweden.*

Mr. COBURN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion?

Mr. COBURN. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, the President will be here tonight, and he will get a warm reception, as Presidents always do when they address the Nation from the Capitol. It is a short trip from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but it is always meaningful whenever a President from either political party speaks to a joint session. So we welcome him.

He picked a good topic. Americans are extremely skeptical about the health care proposals the administration and Democrats in Congress have been talking about over the past several months. And they are understandably baffled by some of the arguments that have been used to promote them.

Americans don't understand how a massive expansion of government will lower costs, as the administration claims. They don't understand how \$500 billion in cuts to Medicare won't affect the millions of seniors who depend on it. Americans don't understand how they'll be able to keep the health plans they have if government is allowed to undermine the private market. And they don't understand why the administration doesn't seem to be listening to these and many other concerns.