



Travel Business Roundtable Statement

Travel and tourism industries are important for a strong economy. It is important for the Nation's future that your businesses thrive, and it is critical for that America be strong, secure, and free. I am proud of the strength and perseverance your industry has displayed over the past several years.

Your industry has faced incredible challenges during the last few years. By the time I took office in January of 2001, we were into a recession. Then the terrorist attacks of September 11th added another major blow to the economy, and to the travel and tourism industries. We lost a million jobs in the weeks after the attacks. People lost jobs and a lot of people stopped traveling.

The terrorist attacks challenged our country in ways we could not have anticipated when I took office. But we have remained steadfast and resolute. Our country is recovering. We are more secure today and as a result more people are traveling.

My tax relief plan has been crucial to our recovery, allowing American taxpayers to keep more of their own money, rather than sending it off to Washington, D.C. With more money in their pockets, American families can take that long-awaited vacation, or students can fly home for the holidays, or owners of small business can expand into other states and countries – thus increasing personal, business, and leisure travel and tourism.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, we provided direct financial relief, as well as loans and subsidized war risk insurance to help the airlines regain stability. In addition, I signed legislation to make significant improvements to the Nation's airports and air traffic control systems to increase safety and allow for more flights. I have made the tough choices necessary to get past the growing pains of this new post-September 11th era. For example, on August 10, I signed into law legislation to extend by one year the deadline for inclusion of biometric identifiers for people traveling under the Visa Waiver Program. I recognize the sometimes conflicting goals of promoting free and open travel and commerce while protecting this country from those who seek to harm us.

As the economy recovered from the catastrophic drop in travel and tourism in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the brave men and women in law enforcement and transportation security stepped up their efforts and their commitment to security. We have provided air marshals, installed reinforced cockpit doors, trained airport screeners, and established terrorist watch lists. As a result, it is now safer to travel in the United States and on U.S. carriers abroad than ever before.

We must also continue to attract tourists and business travelers from abroad. Besides our vast commercial opportunities, this is a country rich in culture, natural beauty, and recreational and leisure opportunities, and I commend the work of the leaders of the travel industry who are promoting America abroad. Those Americans who are actively involved in marketing,

communications, finance, real estate, and many other private sector actors serve as ambassadors to the world, revealing the true spirit of our democracy and free-market system.

I am optimistic about our future, and many Americans feel the same way. My Administration will remain resolute as we face future challenges, and I look forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to set the framework for continued growth and prosperity. I know first-hand the creativity and the enterprise of the American people, and I am optimistic about our economy. Travel and tourism activities help to create powerful first impressions about America's warmth, beauty, and freedom. My hope is that you will prosper, help us to showcase our beautiful Nation, and continue to be ambassadors of America's promise.

| Paid for by Bush-Cheney '04, Inc. |
