Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2006

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
B-307 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218, Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Martin Sabo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

As you begin your negotiations with the Senate on H.R. 5441, the FY07 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we urge you to support the Leahy/Stevens provision in the Senate-passed bill. This provision clarifies changes to the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) by providing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the State Department with an extended deadline and specifying parameters for alternative travel documents.

As members of the Congressional Travel & Tourism Caucus, we would like the WHTI to be implemented in a rational manner to minimize the impact on one of the largest industries in the U.S. economy – the $650 billion travel and tourism industry.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires DHS and State to implement new rules requiring travelers entering or re-entering the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean, including U.S. citizens, to present documents denoting both identity and citizenship by January 1, 2008.

The Leahy/Stevens provision would extend the WHTI deadline to a uniform implementation date of June 1, 2009 for sea and land travel. The provision also outlines how DHS and State should implement the PASS card system.

Again, we ask you to retain the Senate's WHTI language in the final conference report for the FY 2007 Homeland Security appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Mark Foley

Rep. Sam Farr

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Rep. Neil Abercrombie

Rep. Mary Bono

Rep. Lois Capps

Rep. William Delahunt

Rep. Mike Doyle

Rep. Bob Filner

Rep. Mike Honda

Rep. William Jefferson

Rep. Tom Lantos

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Rep. Jim Oberstar

Rep. John Spratt

Rep. Susan Davis

Rep. Tom Allen