

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. State Department
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20520

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson and Secretary Kerry:

Thank you for the Administration's January 21, 2016, announcement regarding implementation of the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act. This announcement clarifies that the law allows for waivers of the new restrictions for certain journalists, humanitarian aid workers, and business travelers. While the announcement addressed a number of important concerns, we request that you take further action to guard against any harmful impacts to dual national American citizens and those traveling to Iran.

As you are aware, the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act, which was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, excludes from the Visa Waiver Program dual nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria. The exclusions also apply to those traveling to these four countries unless a waiver is provided by the Department of Homeland Security. Because the VWP is founded on reciprocity, our U.S. citizen constituents are concerned that this exclusion could result in our VWP partners restricting, or entirely ending, visa-free travel for certain U.S. citizens. It is fundamental to our values as a nation that all citizens are treated equally and without regard to the birthplace of their family. A U.S. passport should confer to its holder the full benefits of citizenship, but for the first time in the Visa Waiver Program's history, some of those who hold U.S. passports could be treated differently due to their national origin and ancestry and reciprocal rules imposed by VWP countries.

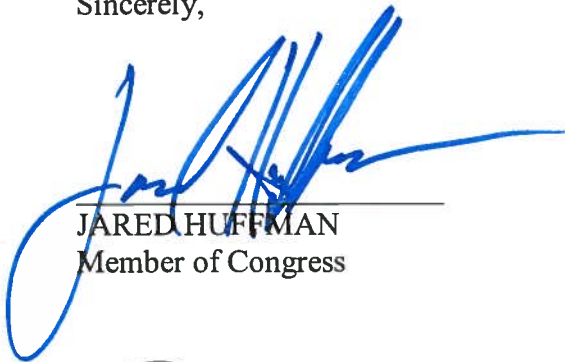
Bipartisan, bicameral legislation has been introduced in Congress to eliminate provisions of the VWP amendments restricting VWP travel for dual nationals. There is congressional support for fine-tuning the statute to ensure that the rights of all Americans are protected as we improve security standards in the Visa Waiver Program. However, immediate action is required to ensure our security needs are met without undue harm to American citizens.

We believe that you have authority under Section 203 of the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act to ensure the protection of our interests abroad and the rights of U.S. citizens. We encourage you to take the additional step of establishing waivers to protect dual nationals of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Sudan and to ensure uninterrupted visa-free travel for American citizens who have visited Iran for family, academic, or tourist related purposes. While heightened security for travelers in some instances is an important response to security threats, the case for including Iran in particular in such reforms is tenuous at best. This decisive action we are requesting will ensure that scrutiny is focused on the most serious security risks while assuring that all U.S. citizens have fair, equal, and uninterrupted access to visa-free travel to VWP countries.

More generally, we ask that you commit to further implementing the VWP amendments in such a manner that U.S. citizens who present no security risk are assured they will not face undue travel restrictions from VWP partners. For example, the new law should be interpreted to impact only true dual nationals. If an individual has not affirmatively acknowledged citizenship, never traveled under another country's passport, or never been physically present in Iran or a similarly restricted nation, VWP travel should still be permitted.

We look forward to your timely response and to working with you to ensure the VWP amendments improve our national security without harming U.S. citizens or our national interests.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress



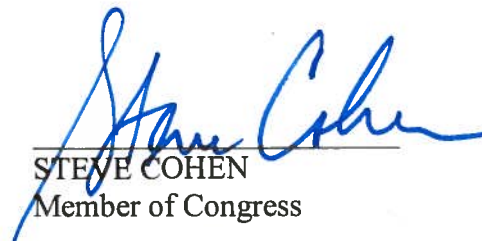
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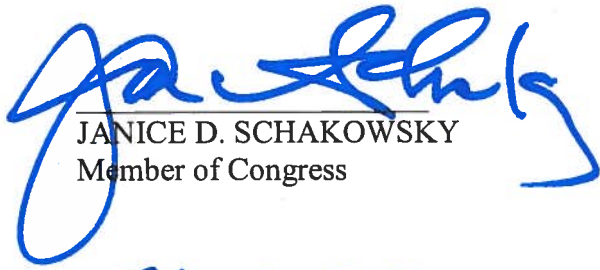
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Member of Congress

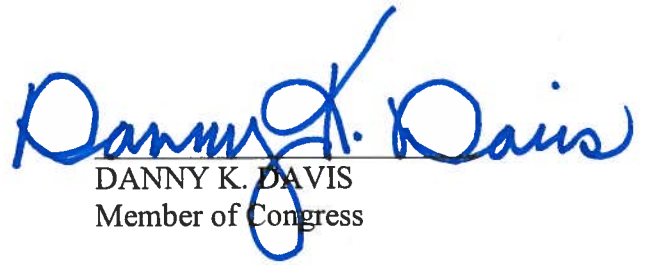


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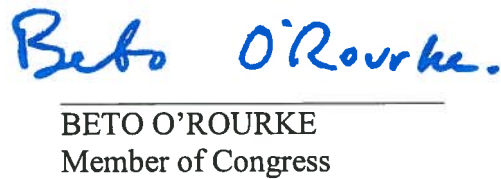

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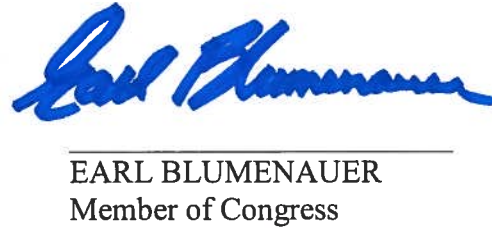

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