



WILLIAM J. CLINTON

42nd President of the United States: 1993 - 2001

Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 3767 - Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act

April 11, 2000

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

(House)

(Smith (R) TX and 12 cosponsors)

The Administration supports making the Visa Waiver Pilot Program permanent and therefore supports House passage of H.R. 3767. However, the Administration has concerns about the legislation as currently written and will continue to work with Congress to ensure that implementation of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) protects both foreign policy and law enforcement interests of the United States.

The Administration strongly supports the provision in the bill that would allow recognition of "common areas for immigration admissions" for the purpose of determining that a reciprocal period of stay will be granted to U. S. citizens.

The Administration agrees that a permanent visa waiver regime requires certain safeguards to ensure that a country's continued participation in the program in no way threatens U.S. interests. H.R. 3767 proposes several measures to tighten up the existing program, including requiring VWP visitors to enter the United States with a machine-readable passport (MRP). However, the Administration finds the compliance dates in the bill too restrictive, and the Administration would suggest allowing countries eight years before their citizens would have to enter the United States with MRPs, rather than the six years that would be permitted by the bill. The Administration also has concerns with other provisions, including those allowing precipitous removal of a country from the program, which could have large administrative resource implications caused by a sudden demand for visas, and the automatic termination clause of the reporting requirement, which seems unnecessary and unduly harsh on the affected VWP country.

The Administration also supports important additional provisions to ensure success of the VWP. The Administration will seek a provision that would require countries, as a condition of initial qualification, to conclude agreements with the United States that ensure that U.S. law enforcement interests are fully protected. Also, requiring reports of lost and stolen blank passports of new countries will aid officers in identifying terrorists and criminals traveling to the United States using fraudulently-obtained VWP passports and enable the Immigration and Naturalization Service to more effectively identify evidence concerning an applicant's inadmissibility on criminal grounds. The Administration will also seek to establish requirements, based upon passport abuse and nonimmigrant visa violation rates, for both initial selection and for automatic review of continued participation in the program, in order to encourage countries to protect the integrity of their passports.

While noting the concerns above, the Administration supports a strong, permanent Visa Waiver Program to advance foreign relations and U.S. travel and business abroad.

William J. Clinton, Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 3767 -Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/275652>

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