



BRIDGEUSA SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PROGRAM

- **Asks:** Support the BridgeUSA Summer Work Travel (SWT) Program by cosponsoring the bipartisan House Resolution 481 sponsored by Representatives Moore (R-UT) and Kuster (D-NH). Additionally, urge the Department of State to lift its self-imposed visa ceiling for the SWT Program, make common sense improvements to visa processing to expedite participant visas, and oppose rules or legislation that would hurt the program and make it more difficult for seasonal businesses to work with this essential exchange visitor program.

- **Background:** The SWT program has been a part of U.S. foreign policy and national security efforts since 1969. Administered by the Department of State as part of the BridgeUSA Exchange Visitor Program through public-private partnerships. This public diplomacy tool builds international goodwill for the United States and supports economic growth at home, at virtually no cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

SWT participants work in areas of the U.S. that have a high percentage of seasonal businesses and extremely low seasonal unemployment rates. This cultural exchange program provides foreign university students with the opportunity to experience American culture and values during their summer breaks from school. While also helping U.S. businesses—many of them small and family-operated—fill short-term workforce needs during peak tourist seasons. Given its unique seasonal operations, the attractions industry is a long-time program partner.

The statistics speak for themselves. Over 75% of SWT exchange visitors report having

a positive experience in the United States. While 50% of employers have reported that a lack of SWT exchange visitors negatively impacts their revenue and 39% indicated they would have to reduce hours without SWT exchange visitors.

- **Issue:** For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, SWT visa issuance has reached pre-pandemic levels however, the Department of State self-imposed cap prevents the program from meeting demand and reaching its full public diplomacy potential. With demand by exchange visitors high and the unemployment rate in the U.S. at historically low levels, lifting the self-imposed cap would enable the program to flourish and meet its full potential at a time when public diplomacy is needed more urgently than ever

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