

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R11379 CLE-D

H.C.R. 13
By: Chavez (Lucio)
International Relations & Trade
5/4/2005
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Canadian travelers to the United States may stay in this country for up to six months, while Mexican visitors only recently gained the right to a 30-day stay with a laser visa under an expansion of the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) program, which previously limited such stays to 72 hours and no more than 25 miles inside the U.S. border. Aside from adversely affecting international goodwill between the United States and its neighbors to the north and south by the disparate treatment of their citizens, this disparity also has a negative impact on the economic stability of the U.S.-Mexico border.

If Mexican tourists, businesspersons, and other short-term travelers received the same opportunities to visit and do business in the United States as their Canadian counterparts, it would facilitate business between the United States and Mexico, boosting the U.S. and Texas economies.

El Paso and other Texas border communities that directly benefit from cross-border travel may expect a dramatic increase in local economic development if the length of stay for Mexican nationals with laser visas is extended from 30 days to six months. Local community leaders attending a recent gathering of the U.S. Hispanic Chambers of Commerce were assured by U.S. Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson that the Bush Administration supports treating all international guests equally.

U.S. Senator John Cornyn and U.S. Representative Ruben Hinojosa, both of Texas, introduced legislation in the 108th Congress (S.#1908 and H.R. 3488, respectively) to allow Mexican nationals currently admissible under laser visa border crossing regulations to enter the United States as six-month nonimmigrant visitors.

RESOLVED

That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to support parity for Mexican visitors to the United States by enacting legislation that would allow them the same six-month length of stay afforded to Canadian travelers.

That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State and to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.