Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H. R. 951, With an Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a complete new text)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 951

To promote bilateral tourism through cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 4, 2019

Mr. Cuellar (for himself and Mr. McCaul) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To promote bilateral tourism through cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States-Mexico Tourism Improvement Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:
The United States and Mexico have benefitted economically from a bilateral, mutually beneficial partnership focused on enhancing the tourism industry in both countries.

In 2016, Mexican tourism to the United States peaked at 18,990,585 visitors, constituting 1 in 4 (24.9 percent) of all tourists that year.

Additionally, in 2016, spending by Mexican tourists in the United States totaled $20.3 billion, which represented a 3 percent growth from 2015.

Tourist activity to the United States from Mexico has declined since 2016, which is in contrast to an overall international tourism industry increase in the United States.

In 2017, international tourist arrivals totaled 76,900,000, up 0.7 percent from 76,400,000 in 2016.

The same year, 77,000,000 international visitors spent a record $251.4 billion on hotels, travel, food, and souvenirs, a 2-percent increase over 2016.

However, also in 2017, there was a 6.1-percent decline in visitors to the United States from Mexico, comprising a loss of 1,166,585 Mexican tourists from 2016.
(8) The Department of Commerce has not yet released 2017 spending totals by Mexican tourists in the United States, but a corresponding monetary decline would be approximately $1.24 billion in lost revenue.

(9) This is a critical economic trend given that Mexico is the biggest source of international visitors to the United States after Canada.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to continue deepening bilateral tourism through governmental cooperation between the United States and Mexico;

(2) to improve third-party tourism to the United States and Mexico through joint international promotional efforts; and

(3) to seek to prioritize and expand the tourism industries in both countries by emphasizing exchanges in various international economic sectors, including relating to—

(A) hospitality and accommodation;

(B) retail; and

(C) cultural education.
SEC. 4. STRATEGY TO EXPAND BILATERAL TOURISM THROUGH COOPERATION WITH MEXICO.

(a) In general.—The Secretary of State shall develop a strategy through the High Level Economic Dialogue (HLED) platform to carry out the bilateral tourism policy described in section 3 and to encourage the Government of Mexico to take reciprocal action relating to bilateral tourism.

(b) Elements.—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) encourage more joint tourism initiatives between the United States and Mexico, including collaborations between governmental and non-governmental entities; and

(2) encourage United States and Mexican non-profit institutions and private businesses to assist prospective and developing entrepreneurs in strengthening their business skills in the United States and Mexico.

(c) Report.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to Congress a report on the strategy required under subsection (a).