



SAN ANTONIO

HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

## 2019 Hospitality & Tourism Federal Priorities

San Antonio ranks as one of the most popular domestic travel destinations, welcoming an average of 34.4 million visitors to the region, 29.7 million visitors to Bexar County, and 18.2 million overnight visitors. Hospitality and Tourism continues to remain one of the region's top industries, employing nearly one in every eight workers (approximately 130,796 individuals) in San Antonio. The industry is currently the third largest industry in the city. This critical industry contributes \$195 million to the city in fees and taxes and a total of \$375 million to all local governments combined.

1. Supports comprehensive immigration reform that will enable the hotel industry to meet the increasing demand for employees, while protecting our national security and ensuring all workers are protected by federal labor laws. We also support legislation and policies that strengthen access to legal guest workers, especially the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals as a number of DACA recipients work in the hospitality industry.
2. Support the increase of non-stop Airline Service to Reagan Airport in Washington D.C. and support this as a citywide initiative. (Air Service Task Force is working on this with the City's Governmental Affairs Department).
3. Support Brand USA and all efforts to Market the U.S. as a destination. The mission of Brand USA is to encourage and increase international visitation to the United States and to grow America's share of the global travel market. In doing so, we aim to bring millions of new international visitors who spend billions of dollars to the United States, creating tens of thousands of new American jobs.
4. Support Airport Infrastructure—Citywide Initiatives including the increase of PFC charges (Passenger Facility Charge) to remodel and continue to improve airports at the national level. The PFC has not been changed in over 10 years and it still remains in San Antonio at \$4.50 when it needs to adjust to \$8.50 per passenger. This is a national effort to modernize our Airports.
5. Continue to Support the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) as it is critical to increase foreign travel to the United States and help our economy. US Travel encourages the US government to maintain these policies so that key Latin American allies such as Argentina, Brazil etc. can become part of the VMP.
6. Increase of the local per diem rates set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Travel per diem rates are based on local market costs of mid-priced hotels, lodging per diem rates provide caps, or maximum amounts, that can be reimbursed to federal employees for lodging and meals while on official travel.