

ECA ADVOCACY UPDATE

Driving economic growth. Supporting job creation. Empowering small businesses.

February 16, 2024



1. New visa delay bill introduced in House

Last week, the [VISITOR Act](#) was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Dina Titus from Nevada and Rep. María Elvira Salazar from Florida.

Go deeper: This bipartisan bill would allow greater flexibility for U.S. State Department's Consular Affairs Bureau to use the money collected from passport and visa fees to address the backlog in processing visas at U.S. consular posts.

With funds collected from passport and visa fees in the VISITOR Act, Consular Affairs would be able to:

- Make needed technological upgrades at posts. 🖥️
- Hire more personnel to conduct visa adjudications. 👥
- Build out visa processing infrastructure at high-volume sites. 🏢

ECA's view: This carefully-crafted bill proposes important changes to chip away at visa wait times and ensure such a giant backlog never happens again.

- In addition, the VISITOR Act sets a goal for the State Department to interview 80% of all nonimmigrant visa applicants (including those seeking business visas) within 3 weeks of receiving their applications.



2. Legislative Action Day registration is hot! 🔥

ECA's Legislative Action Day is more than 3 months away, but registration is already at 50% of last year's total!

On Thursday, May 30, [Legislative Action Day](#) will bring industry leaders and advocates from across the business events ecosystem to Washington, DC to meet with policymakers on Capitol Hill about ECA's top policy priorities including:

- **Finally restoring visa operations** to pre-pandemic levels while modernizing the visa processing system. 🌐
- **Passing workforce legislation this year** that help us attract and train the industry's next generation workforce. 👤

Why it matters: Check out this great video featuring some of last year's attendees sharing their perspective on why being part of Legislative Action Day is so important to them and the future of our industry.



Sign up for free and help us make this the biggest Legislative Action Day ever!

[Register here!](#)



3. In brief: policy news and updates

- **In early March**, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will [resume collection](#) of past-due Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) with balances of \$100,000 or less. Last year, the SBA ended active collections on these smaller EIDL loans but reversed course under pressure from Congressional leaders and federal government watchdogs.
- **In Florida**, the so-called "[Right to Rock](#)" act died in committee earlier this week. This legislation, which ECA actively opposed, would have prohibited the cancellation of performances by singers, musicians, comedians, and others taking place in any publicly-funded venue because of those performers' social media comments or political affiliation.
- **ECA remains actively engaged** in New York, Tennessee, Nebraska, and the District of Columbia in opposition to proposals to tax digital advertising in those jurisdictions. While no such proposals have advanced to date, ECA is particularly concerned about [efforts in Nebraska](#) to reduce property taxes by taxing a broad range of services for the first time, including digital advertising.



4. On the road with ECA

In the coming weeks, ECA will be hitting the road to take part in several great industry and advocacy events. Hope to see you there!

- **February 25:** [EDPA Engage](#) (Nashville, TN)
- **February 25-28:** [EXHIBITORLIVE](#) (Nashville, TN)
- **March 5-6:** [ASAE Legislative Fly-In](#) (Washington, DC)
- **April 8-10:** [SISO CEO Summit](#) (Amelia Island, FL)



5. In case you missed it...

- **ECA is partnering with TSNN** to [contribute to TSNN's blog](#) on a monthly basis. Check out our [first post](#) on why workforce advocacy is so important.
- **Download and listen** to the new episode of the EXHIBITOR Now [Association & Advocacy Focus](#) podcast, featuring the latest news that you need to know from ECA and its alliance partner associations.
- **Music licensing** [hit the headlines](#) on Super Bowl Sunday. (Thanks, Taylor!)
- **Exhibitions Industry Awareness Week** is taking place [next week](#), February 20-24. ECA's session features CrewXP's Chris Griffin and ASAE's Jeff Evans talking about legislation to help develop the industry's future workforce.



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