

S 2362

Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Immigration

Introduced: Dec 7, 2015

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (Dec 7, 2015)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2362>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Johnson, Ron [R-WI]

Party: Republican • **State:** WI • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (2 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Blunt, Roy [R-MO]	R · MO		Dec 8, 2015
Sen. Inhofe, James M. [R-OK]	R · OK		Dec 18, 2015

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	Senate	Referred To	Dec 7, 2015

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Immigration

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 2029	Related bill	Dec 18, 2015: Became Public Law No: 114-113.
114 HR 158	Related bill	Dec 9, 2015: Received in the Senate.

Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015

This bill amends the Immigration and Nationality Act regarding the visa waiver program to require that an alien, when applying for program admission, possess a valid unexpired passport that:

- is machine-readable, tamper-resistant, incorporates document authentication identifiers, and otherwise satisfies the internationally accepted standard for machine readability; and
- beginning on April 1, 2016, is an electronic passport that is fraud-resistant, contains relevant biographic and biometric information, and satisfies internationally accepted standards for electronic passports.

A program country must certify that:

- it issues passports that satisfy the internationally accepted standard for machine readability, and as of April 1, 2016, passports that satisfy internationally accepted standards for electronic passports; and
- by October 1, 2016, except for travel between countries within the Schengen Zone (26 European countries that have abolished passport and any other border control at their common borders), it has in place mechanisms to validate such passports at each key port of entry.

An alien shall be ineligible for program participation who:

- has been present, at any time on or after March 1, 2011, in Iraq or Syria, in a country designated as one that has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, or in any other country or area of concern designated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and
- regardless of whether the alien is a national of a program country, is not a national of Iraq or Syria, a country designated as a country that has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, or any other country or area of concern.

Such prohibitions shall not apply to an alien who was present in such a country to perform military or official government service for a program country.

DHS may waive such prohibitions if in U.S. law enforcement or national security interests.

DHS shall determine and review annually whether such prohibitions shall apply to any country or area using specified criteria.

A program country shall:

- report the loss or theft of one of its national's passports to the United States within 24 hours; and
- except in the case of a country without an international airport, and except for travel between countries within the Schengen Zone, certify to DHS that it is screening each entering or departing non-citizen or non-national for unlawful activity by using Interpol databases and notices, or other means designated by DHS.

If DHS and the State Department jointly determine that a program country is not sharing information or conducting required screening, DHS shall terminate the country's program status, subject to specified conditions for reinstatement.

DHS shall evaluate program countries annually and identify and suspend from program participation any country whose

nationals present a high U.S. security risk, taking into consideration specified criteria.

DHS shall expand Federal Air Marshal operations.

The electronic travel authorization system is renamed the electronic system for travel authorization.

It is the sense of Congress that:

- the International Civil Aviation Organization should establish electronic passport standards and obligate member countries to utilize them as soon as possible, and
- such passports should be a combined paper and electronic passport that contains biographic and biometric information that can be used to authenticate identity through an embedded chip.

Actions Timeline

- **Dec 7, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Dec 7, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.