

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 638

To impose a moratorium on the use of appropriated funds for official travel outside of the United States by Members, officers, and employees of the House of Representatives until the Comptroller General issues a report on the costs of such travel and makes recommendations regarding appropriate restrictions and reporting requirements on such travel.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 10, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To impose a moratorium on the use of appropriated funds for official travel outside of the United States by Members, officers, and employees of the House of Representatives until the Comptroller General issues a report on the costs of such travel and makes recommendations regarding appropriate restrictions and reporting requirements on such travel.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Suspending Travel
3 After Years of Pleasure trips on Unwitting Taxpayers Act
4 of 2011” or the “STAY PUT Act of 2011”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) The Wall Street Journal reported on July
8 2, 2009, that spending on Congressional foreign
9 travel has increased nearly tenfold since 1995, with
10 lawmakers spending almost \$13 million on foreign
11 trips in 2008. According to a December 17, 2009,
12 follow-up report, the Wall Street Journal found that
13 spending on Congressional foreign travel had in-
14 creased by 70 percent from 2005 to 2008.

15 (2) The true cost of Congressional foreign trav-
16 el cannot be calculated because the cost to travel
17 outside of the United States on a military aircraft
18 does not have to be disclosed by the Department of
19 Defense.

20 (3) The Congressional foreign travel reporting
21 requirements established by the Mutual Security Act
22 of 1954 (22 U.S.C. 1754) do not require members
23 of Congress to reveal the purpose or merit of their
24 foreign travel to the taxpayers.

1 **SEC. 3. MORATORIUM ON USE OF FUNDS FOR OFFICIAL**
2 **FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS OF HOUSE**
3 **OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

4 (a) MORATORIUM.—Until the Comptroller General
5 submits the report required under section 4(b), no appro-
6 priated funds, including official funds of the House of
7 Representatives or funds available under any Federal law,
8 rule, or regulation, may be used to pay for official travel
9 outside of the United States by any Member, officer, or
10 employee of the House of Representatives.

11 (b) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN TRAVEL.—Subsection
12 (a) shall not apply with respect to the following travel:

13 (1) Travel to a military installation.

14 (2) Travel to a theater of operations of the
15 Armed Forces.

16 (3) Travel by Members and employees of the
17 Committee on Foreign Affairs, if the travel is for of-
18 ficial Committee business.

19 (4) Travel by Members and employees of the
20 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, if the
21 travel is for official Committee business.

22 **SEC. 4. STUDY AND REPORT ON EXPENDITURES FOR OFFI-**
23 **CIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL.**

24 (a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General shall conduct
25 a study of the use of appropriated funds (including official
26 funds of the House of Representatives, funds made avail-

1 able for the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of
2 State, and other funds available under any Federal law,
3 rule, or regulation) for official travel outside of the United
4 States by Members, officers, and employees of the House
5 of Representatives, and shall include in the study the fol-
6 lowing:

7 (1) For the period beginning with fiscal year
8 1994 and ending with the most recent fiscal year for
9 which relevant information is available, and for each
10 fiscal year during such period, the amount of such
11 funds spent on such travel, the number of trips
12 taken, and a list of the most frequently visited des-
13 tinations, broken down by travel by Members, travel
14 by employees, and travel for which payment was
15 made using funds of committees of the House of
16 Representatives.

17 (2) The source of funds used to pay for such
18 travel, and any limits on the amount which may be
19 spent on such travel or on any component of such
20 travel, such as airfare and accommodations.

21 (3) The procedures by which the use of funds
22 for such travel is approved, including reporting re-
23 quirements which apply either before or after the
24 travel is undertaken, and whether those procedures
25 sufficiently restrict the use of the funds for travel

1 which is not in the best interests of taxpayers and
2 provide sufficiently detailed information regarding
3 how the funds are used.

4 (4) The types of military aircraft which are
5 used to carry out such travel, the military personnel
6 required to operate such aircraft, and the aggregate
7 and hourly costs involved.

8 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall
10 submit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
11 the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State a
12 report on the study conducted under subsection (a), and
13 shall include in the report such recommendations as the
14 Comptroller General considers appropriate for restrictions
15 on, and reporting requirements applicable to, official trav-
16 el outside of the United States by Members, officers, and
17 employees of the House of Representatives which will pro-
18 mote transparency and cost savings.

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