

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION REGARDING
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

Resolution Summary

Sponsored by Mr. Russell Copeman, Member of the Quebec National Assembly

This resolution is based on a similar resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of CSG-East on October 22, 2005. It concerns an announcement by the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department that travelers arriving from within the Western hemisphere will soon require a passport to enter or re-enter the U.S. Currently, U.S. citizens and their Canadian counterparts do not require a passport to cross the border. Many state and provincial leaders are concerned that the new requirement will damage cross border trade and tourism. The resolution recognizes the importance of strengthening border security, but asks the administration to explore less onerous measures to achieve this purpose.

Directives

CSG is instructed to share the resolution the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Canada, and the Governors, Premiers and legislative leaders of the states and provinces along the U.S.-Canada border.

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION

REGARDING THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

- Whereas,** the Canada–United States border relationship is a special one with more than 300,000 business people, tourists and regular commuters traveling between Canada and the United States every day; and
- Whereas,** on average \$1.1-billion in goods crosses the Canada-United States Border every day; and
- Whereas,** on April 5, 2005, the Departments of Homeland Security and State announced the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) which would require all travelers to and from the United States to have a passport or other accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States; and
- Whereas,** The Council of State Governments recognizes and acknowledges the security concerns in the United States which the WHTI is attempting to address through improved security; and
- Whereas,** the economic viability of many communities along the U.S. and Canadian border depends on facilitating, in a spirit of collaboration, border crossings, whether by air, land or sea; and
- Whereas,** 56 percent of same day travelers from the United States, and 40 percent of same day travelers from Canada, and 50 percent of overnight travelers from the United States and 30 per cent of overnight travelers from Canada do not possess a passport; and
- Whereas,** a recent report, prepared by Conference Board of Canada for the Canadian Tourism Commission, estimates that this passport requirement would result in 3.5 million fewer trips into the United States from Canada by 2008, resulting in a loss of \$785 million in potential tourism revenue, and 7.7 million fewer trips by U.S. citizens into Canada, resulting in a \$1.7 billion loss in revenues; and
- Whereas,** the WHTI as currently outlined will be a deterrent to travel and negatively impact the total number of border crossings, having significant implications for the economies of both Canada and the United States; and
- Whereas,** on September 1, 2005, the U.S. government published, in the Federal Register, an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) on the plan to implement the WHTI and opened a period of public comment on the plan; and
- Whereas,** the ANPR confirmed the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and State have delayed and simplified the implementation of WHTI and now says that the rules will apply to all individuals traveling to the United States by air and by sea beginning December 31, 2006, and will apply to all individuals entering or re-entering the U.S. via its land border crossings as of December 31, 2007.

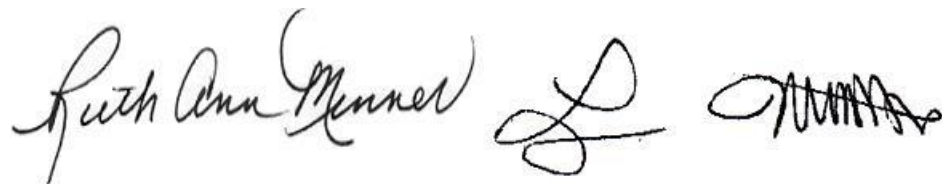
Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Council of State Governments urges the federal government to delay the implementation of the WHTI until such time that less onerous documentation requirements or passport substitutes can be considered, and until frequent border-crossings programs, like NEXUS, FAST and CANPASS, are expanded to more locations; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Chairmen and Ranking members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, the House Homeland Security Committee and the House International Relations Committee; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Canada; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governors, Premiers and legislative leaders of the states and provinces that share these common borders.

Adopted this 4th day of December, 2005, at the
CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum in Wilmington, Delaware

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Ruth Ann Minner' and the signature on the right is 'Lynn Hettrick'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Ruth Ann Minner
2005 CSG President

Assemblyman Lynn Hettrick
2005 CSG Chair