



Policy Solutions for Our Employees, Guests, and Communities



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FROM THE

President & CEO



Every day, America's hotels make dreams come true—not just for our guests, but also for the 8.3 million people whose jobs we support. That's more than one in every 25 American jobs.

Hotels contribute nearly \$660 billion to U.S. GDP. And with lifelong career opportunities and limitless upward mobility, we have the unique ability to offer our employees the chance to achieve the American Dream. As employers, taxpayers, and neighbors, hoteliers are proud to be an integral part of every community—and we are committed to strengthening and growing them together.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) is honored to lead the hotel industry's national advocacy agenda and share stories of opportunity, growth, innovation, and success.

From city hall to the halls of Congress and the Administration, we are committed to engaging policymakers and community leaders on important issues such as addressing our workforce needs; protecting our guests and neighborhoods; and promoting travel and tourism.

We will continue to work across the aisle to advocate for policies so that our industry—and our communities—continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chip Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chip" being more prominent than the last name "Rogers".

Chip Rogers, President & CEO



IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS

We put people first



Safety & Security

The hotel industry is centered on people taking care of people. Hotels have been investing in safety and security for decades, working with experts to continuously review and update protocols, procedures and technologies that keep both employees and guests safe.

AHLA, AAHOA, and IHLA helped to train more than 500 Chicago-area hotel employees to spot the signs of trafficking at an event with federal, state, and local leaders.



AHLA Board and Executive Team participating in Denim Day, a campaign by Peace Over Violence to end sexual violence in April as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.





Our Industry's Commitment to Employee Safety

In an unprecedented effort in September 2018, AHLA announced the *5-Star Promise*, a voluntary commitment by AHLA members to enhance policies, trainings, and resources, including employee safety devices, that together are aimed at strengthening safety and security for hotel employees and guests.

Today, nearly 60 member companies representing an estimated 20,000 hotel properties have made the pledge. As a result, an estimated 1.2 million employees will be better protected on the job. More than 5,000 properties have already deployed safety devices, with the remainder on track to do so by the end of this year.

- ★ Build on our people culture
- ★ Mandatory anti-sexual harassment policies
- ★ Ongoing employee training and education
- ★ Employee safety devices
- ★ Vital partnerships with national organizations

Safety is a never-ending challenge, and the hotel industry is committed to solutions. We will continue to work, day in and day out, so that America's hotels are secure places for all those who work in and visit them.



AHLA launched *No Room for Trafficking*, a national awareness campaign to unite the industry around one effort to train every employee and help stop trafficking. This builds on long-standing efforts of the hotel industry to raise awareness, identify best practices, provide educational resources, and train employees. Combatting human trafficking requires commitment and engagement by the entire hotel industry.

No Room for Trafficking is centered around four key pillars:

- 1 ELEVATE** Raise awareness of human trafficking indicators through increased education, resources and training for all hotel employees
- 2 ASSESS** Conduct ongoing reviews and updates of protocols, procedures and technologies to confirm training effectiveness and employee vigilance
- 3 EDUCATE** Develop strategic intervention and disruption strategies that equip hotel employees with tools, working in conjunction with partners and law enforcement, to identify and report suspected trafficking situations
- 4 SUPPORT** Further our partnerships with leading national human trafficking prevention and law enforcement organizations to establish industry standards and support human trafficking survivors.

Throughout 2020, AHLA will work with all levels of government and our Partner State Associations to ensure effective legislative solutions around the country.



AHLA, AAHOA join Representative Doug Collins and Senator David Perdue at a regional *No Room for Trafficking* event.

QUIET PLEASE,

Dreams happening

Hotels strengthen communities in every single Congressional district in the country, powering our economy and supporting our employees.

The hotel industry is a major economic driver, supporting one in 25 American jobs—8.3 million in total—and providing opportunities for lifelong careers, upward mobility, fast-tracked promotions, and workplace flexibility. Six in ten hotels, or more than 33,000 properties, are small businesses.



Faced with historically low unemployment and the tightest labor market in decades, the AHLA Foundation has created innovative programs that recruit, retain, and invest in employees. In just the last two years, Foundation programs have changed 40,000 lives through:

- Scholarship grants and a debt-free college program
- Expanded apprenticeships and certifications
- Recruiting and training Opportunity Youth for hotel careers



**Dreams
happen
here.**

**\$1.86
BILLION**
IN LOCAL, STATE,
AND FEDERAL
TAXES

**8.3
MILLION**
(1 IN 25)
**AMERICAN
JOBS**

Our employees

Protecting Employee Choice

The hotel industry proudly supports those seeking to achieve the American Dream—from entrepreneurs opening hotels through the franchise model, to employees seeking workplace flexibility, upward mobility and exciting lifelong careers. AHLA supports labor policies that empower entrepreneurs, encourage business growth, and protect employee freedoms.

The Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or PRO Act, would rewrite our country's labor laws, hurting employees and employers alike. Among other provisions, the PRO Act would:

- Repeal right-to-work laws that give employees the choice of whether to join a union;
- Undermine secret ballot elections;
- Compromise employee privacy; and
- Adopt an expansive definition of what it means to be a joint employer, creating uncertainty and undue liability for franchisors and franchisees alike.

AHLA POSITION

AHLA urges Congress to oppose the PRO Act.





Comprehensive Immigration Reform

One of the most acute challenges facing hotels today is hiring employees to fill critical positions amidst the tightest labor market in a generation. Hoteliers are working hard to build our talent pipeline, but we also need federal policies that help us meet increasing labor demands so we can serve our guests and continue to grow.

The hotel industry thrives because our employees are as global as our guests. We have always been a major employer of immigrants, and we also rely on legal guest worker programs to augment our workforce. We believe that the United States can have both an effective and welcoming legal immigration process that enables hotels and other businesses to meet our workforce needs, while also protecting our national security.

AHLA POSITION

AHLA urges Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform and to pass legislation that strengthens the H-2B and J-1 visa programs.

Chip Rogers speaking to attendees at the 2019 Hospitality is Working event in Dallas, Texas



AHLA Foundation award recipient Tonya Hall and Hazel Davis of WorkPaths Strategy



A level playing field

The hotel industry supports home sharing, the rights of property owners to rent out a room in their home, and we have advocated for ordinances that officially legalize such short-term rentals. But we also believe short-term rentals should abide by the same laws as hotels and every other business: registering their business, paying taxes, following laws and regulations, and removing illegal listings.

Unfortunately, many Big Tech short-term rental platforms flout local laws, creating safety concerns, reducing affordable housing inventory, driving up rent prices, and displacing long-term residents. Communities across the country are recognizing this growing challenge and adopting common-sense regulations to rein in illegal hotels.



AMERICANS AGREE: SHORT-TERM RENTAL PLATFORMS ARE

**77%
AGREE** If a rental listing is illegal or banned by local government laws, Airbnb should be required to remove it.

(Morning Consult, 2019)

**NOT ABOVE
THE LAW**

**76%
AGREE** If Airbnb is making a profit from short-term rentals on its site, they should ensure the property owner is following local laws and safety requirements.

Unfortunately, certain rental platforms, such as **AIRBNB AND HOMEAWAY, ARE EXPLOITING A LOOPHOLE IN FEDERAL LAW TO AVOID COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES.**

Rather than work with cities on reasonable regulations for short-term rentals, they have sued in federal and state courts, preferring to litigate rather than negotiate a workable framework.

States and municipalities should be free to adopt and implement reasonable planning and zoning laws that govern short-term rentals. Billion-dollar tech platforms that profit from their website content should be accountable for that content and should be required to remove rental listings when found to be illegal.

The Protecting Local Authority and Neighborhoods Act (PLAN Act) would amend Section 230 of the federal Communications Decency Act (CDA) to make it clear that CDA 230 does not shield Big Tech short-term rental platforms from complying with state and local laws.

AHLA POSITION

AHLA supports common-sense regulations and accountability for the short-term rental industry.

AHLA urges Congress to pass the PLAN Act to amend CDA 230.

Our guests

The hotel industry leads when it comes to the evolving digital landscape – embracing technology to transform the guest experience. Unfortunately, efforts by third-party hotel room resellers to mislead and even defraud consumers are on the rise, compromising the guest experience.

Search Smarter

BOOK  **BOOK**
SMART  **DIRECT**

Consumers need clarity

Every day, deceptive websites, online ads, and search engines mislead thousands of consumers into believing they are booking directly with a hotel's website or call center, when in fact they have no affiliation to the hotel.

A survey commissioned by AHLA found that 23 percent of consumers report being misled by third-party travel resellers on the phone or online. That translates into 28.7 million hotel stays and \$5.7 billion in fraudulent and misleading hotel booking transactions in 2018 alone, resulting in extra fees, incorrect accommodations, and even lost reservations.



23%
OF CONSUMERS
MISLED



25% REPORT
ISSUES
WITH 3RD PARTY BOOKINGS



94%
WANT ONLINE
TRANSPARENCY



77%
WANT LAWS ENFORCED

AHLA POSITION

AHLA urges Congress to pass the Stop Online Booking Scams Act to force online travel agencies to prominently disclose to consumers that they are not booking directly with the hotel.

(Morning Consult, 2019)

NEARLY 97% OF THE ONLINE TRAVEL MARKET IS CONTROLLED BY TWO COMPANIES.

75% of travelers are unaware that most online travel agencies are owned by just two companies.



(Morning Consult, 2019; Kalibri Labs)

Consolidation of Online Travel Agencies

For the unwitting internet travel shopper, it appears as if there is robust competition and unlimited options when booking travel online. In reality, just two companies, Expedia and Booking Holdings, control nearly 97 percent of the online travel market. Three in four consumers (75%) are unaware that when they comparison shop online, they are comparing the same two parent companies.

AHLA POSITION

AHLA urges lawmakers to review anti-competitive practices within the online travel industry and provide greater protection and disclosure for consumers.

Promoting Transparency

Hotels strive to create memorable experiences for all guests, every single day. That means delivering amenities and services that meet our guests' expectations and evolving tastes; offering real, tangible value; and ensuring that booking transactions are transparent. Most destinations have a wide variety of accommodation options available. Having all the information ahead of time allows consumers to choose the best property for their situation and their budget.

When guests choose a property with a resort or amenities fee, the fee is clearly displayed by hotels prior to the end of the booking process, in accordance with guidance issued by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Third-party travel websites may not always provide the same booking transparency and cost breakdowns as hotels, and they may charge additional service fees that undisclosed at time of booking.

AHLA POSITION

All online lodging advertisers, including third-party online travel agencies and short-term rental platforms, should be held to the same standards of transparency.

Travel & Tourism

Travel and tourism are critical drivers of the American economy, generating \$2.5 trillion in economic output and supporting one in ten American jobs. Maintaining and growing this segment requires increasing the flow of international visitors to the U.S. while recognizing the value of government, business and leisure travel here at home.

Globally, more people are traveling, but the U.S. share of international travelers has declined since 2015, costing an estimated 120,000 new jobs and an additional \$59 billion in spending by international visitors. The U.S. can facilitate and encourage international visitors while keeping a strong commitment to security. We support a welcoming message to the world and policies that strike an appropriate balance between security and travel.

Congress recognized the importance of international visitors to the U.S. when it reauthorized Brand USA, a public-private partnership that promotes America as a travel destination

for international visitors. Brand USA continues to be an unqualified success, welcoming international travelers, generating jobs and enhancing America's image abroad—at zero expense to American taxpayers.



**TRAVEL IS AMERICA'S
SECOND
LARGEST
EXPORT
GENERATING A
\$69 BILLION
TRADE SURPLUS**



**SINCE 2015 THE
DECLINE
IN INTERNATIONAL
INBOUND
TRAVEL
HAS COST THE
ECONOMY
AN ESTIMATED
\$59 BILLION
& 120,000 JOBS**

AHLA POSITION

AHLA supports policies that promote travel to and within the U.S. while continuing to ensure that safety and security remains a top priority. The Visa Waiver Program is an example of a vital program that includes enhanced security measures while making travel to the U.S. as efficient and accessible as possible.

Every segment of the industry

AHLA is the singular voice that brings together and represents the lodging industry's multitude of constituents: global hotel brands; hotel owners and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs); management companies; branded and independent properties and bed & breakfasts; state hotel associations; and industry partners and suppliers.



AHLA: Representing more than 3.2 million U.S. hotel rooms

Every day, America's hotels make dreams come true, not just for our guests, but also for the 8.3 million people whose jobs we support—more than one in every 25 American jobs. The American Hotel & Lodging Association focuses on strategic advocacy, communications support and workforce development programs to move the lodging industry and our employees forward. Learn more at www.ahla.com.

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