

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 43
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International Relations & Trade
5/2/2007
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 requires that the United States issue machine-readable biometric Border Crossing Cards, also called "laser visas," for use by Mexican nationals visiting the United States. Currently, most Mexican visitors to our country receive a laser visa. Laser visa applicants undergo a thorough security screening process before receiving a visa and provide identification data that is encoded on the visa that can be verified by biometric authentication technologies, providing a reliable system to allow temporary, fully screened visitors to enter our country from Mexico.

Although the length of stay allowed Mexican nationals with laser visas was extended in 2004 by the United States Congress from three to 30 days, the current law falls far short of parity with Canadian visitors, who do not use laser visas and who may stay in this country for up to six months. Providing Mexican tourists, businesspersons, and other short-term visitors the same opportunities to visit and do business in the United States as their Canadian counterparts would increase economic development in Texas border communities and promote goodwill between the United States and Mexico.

The Secure Border Crossing Card Entry Act of 2007, introduced in the 110th Congress by Senator John Cornyn and Representative Henry Cuellar (S. 422 and H.R. 702, respectively), extends the length of stay for Mexican visitors using a laser visa from 30 days to six months, or parity with Canadian visitors. Extending the length of stay permitted Mexican visitors using laser visas to full parity with Canadian visitors supports the economic needs of Texas and successfully balances national security with the benefits of legitimate trade and travel.

RESOLVED

The 80th Legislature of the State of Texas, Regular Session, hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to enact the Secure Border Crossing Card Entry Act of 2007. Requires the Texas secretary of state to forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives, to the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.