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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Passport Act of June 4, 1920, to make certain improvements with respect to expenditure and other authorities, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CARTER of Georgia introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To amend the Passport Act of June 4, 1920, to make certain improvements with respect to expenditure and other authorities, and for other purposes.

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

3 **SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act, the following definitions apply:

5 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-  
6 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
7 mittees” means the Committee on Foreign Relations

1 of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2 of the House of Representatives.

3 (2) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”  
4 means the Department of State.

5 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
6 the Secretary of State.

7 **SEC. 2. PASSPORT FEE EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY EXTEN-**  
8 **SION.**

9 (a) WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE  
10 FEE.—To make permanent the Western Hemisphere  
11 Travel Initiative fee, section 1(b) of the Passport Act of  
12 June 4, 1920, (22 U.S.C. 214(b)(1)) is amended—

13 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “(1)”; and

14 (2) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3).

15 (b) PASSPORT FEES.—Section 1(b) of the Passport  
16 Act of June 4, 1920, as amended by subsection (a), shall  
17 be applied through fiscal year 2028 by striking “such  
18 costs” and inserting “the costs of providing consular serv-  
19 ices”.

20 (c) MODERNIZATION OF PASSPORT PROCESSING.—A  
21 portion of the expanded expenditure authorities provided  
22 in subsections (a) and (b) shall be used—

23 (1) to modernize consular systems, with an em-  
24 phasis on passport and citizenship services; and



1 much of passport revenues the Department is spend-  
2 ing on consular systems modernization;

3 (4) the demand for urgent passport services by  
4 major metropolitan area;

5 (5) the steps that have been taken by the De-  
6 partment to reduce and meet the demand for urgent  
7 passport services, particularly in areas that are  
8 greater than 5 hours driving time from the nearest  
9 passport agency; and

10 (6) how the Department details its staff and re-  
11 sources to passport services programs.

12 **SEC. 5. PASSPORT TRAVEL ADVISORIES.**

13 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-  
14 ment of this Act, the Department shall make prominently  
15 available in United States regular passports, on the first  
16 3 pages of the passport, the following information:

17 (1) A prominent, clear advisory for all travelers  
18 to check [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for updated travel warnings  
19 and advisories.

20 (2) A prominent, clear notice urging all trav-  
21 elers to register with the Department prior to over-  
22 seas travel.

23 (3) A prominent, clear advisory—

1 (A) noting that many countries deny entry  
2 to travelers during the last 6 months of their  
3 passport validity period; and

4 (B) urging all travelers to renew their  
5 passport not later than 1 year prior to its expi-  
6 ration.

7 **SEC. 6. STRATEGY TO ENSURE ACCESS TO PASSPORT SERV-**  
8 **ICES FOR ALL AMERICANS.**

9 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-  
10 ment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a strategy  
11 to the appropriate congressional committees, the Com-  
12 mittee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Com-  
13 mittee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives  
14 for ensuring reasonable access to passport services for all  
15 Americans, which shall include—

16 (1) a detailed strategy describing how the De-  
17 partment could—

18 (A) by not later than 1 year after submis-  
19 sion of the strategy, reduce passport processing  
20 times to an acceptable average for renewals and  
21 for expedited service; and

22 (B) by not later than 2 years after the  
23 submission of the strategy, provide United  
24 States residents living in a significant popu-  
25 lation center more than a 5-hour drive from a

1 passport agency with urgent, in-person passport  
2 services, including the possibility of building  
3 new passport agencies; and

4 (2) a description of the specific resources re-  
5 quired to implement the strategy.

6 **SEC. 7. STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL PASSPORT INFOR-**  
7 **MATION CENTER.**

8 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
9 gress that passport wait times since 2021 have been unac-  
10 ceptably long and have created frustration among those  
11 seeking to obtain or renew passports.

12 (b) ONLINE CHAT FEATURE.—The Department  
13 should develop an online tool with the capability for cus-  
14 tomers to correspond with customer service representa-  
15 tives regarding questions and updates pertaining to their  
16 application for a passport or for the renewal of a passport.

17 (c) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the  
18 date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
19 of the United States shall initiate a review of NPIC oper-  
20 ations, which shall include an analysis of the extent to  
21 which NPIC—

22 (1) responds to constituent inquiries by tele-  
23 phone, including how long constituents are kept on  
24 hold and their ability to be placed in a queue;

25 (2) provides personalized customer service;

1           (3) maintains its telecommunications infra-  
2           structure to ensure it effectively handles call vol-  
3           umes; and

4           (4) other relevant issues the Comptroller Gen-  
5           eral deems appropriate.

6 **SEC. 8. STRENGTHENING PASSPORT CUSTOMER VISIBILITY**  
7 **AND TRANSPARENCY.**

8           (a) **ONLINE STATUS TOOL.**—Not later than 2 years  
9           after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Depart-  
10          ment should modernize the online passport application  
11          status tool to include, to the greatest extent possible, step  
12          by step updates on the status of their application, includ-  
13          ing with respect to the following stages:

14               (1) Submitted for processing.

15               (2) In process at a lockbox facility.

16               (3) Awaiting adjudication.

17               (4) In process of adjudication.

18               (5) Adjudicated with a result of approval or de-  
19          nial.

20               (6) Materials shipped.

21           (b) **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**—The tool pursuant  
22          to subsection (a) should include a display that informs  
23          each passport applicant of—

24               (1) the date on which his or her passport appli-  
25          cation was received; and

1           (2) the estimated wait time remaining in the  
2           passport application process.

3           (c) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date  
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of  
5 State for Consular Affairs shall submit a report to the  
6 appropriate congressional committees that outlines a plan  
7 for coordinated comprehensive public outreach to increase  
8 public awareness and understanding of—

9           (1) the online status tool required under sub-  
10          section (a);

11          (2) passport travel advisories required under  
12          section 4; and

13          (3) passport wait times.