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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE HONG KONG IN THE UNITED STATES VISA WAIVER PROGRAM AND EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS AND THE VISA APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR BUSINESS AND TOURIST TRAVELERS WITH HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION PASSPORTS.

1           WHEREAS, the United States maintains substantial economic  
2 and social ties with Hong Kong, with more than one thousand  
3 United States firms and over sixty thousand American residents  
4 in that country; and  
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6           WHEREAS, American exports to Hong Kong totaled \$26.6  
7 billion in 2010 and direct investments in Hong Kong at the end  
8 of 2009 totaled approximately \$40.5 billion, making the United  
9 States one of the largest investors in Hong Kong, along with  
10 China, the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, Japan, and the  
11 Netherlands; and  
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13           WHEREAS, despite the strong ties between the United States  
14 and Hong Kong, the visa application and approval process for  
15 Hong Kong business and tourist travelers can be an inconvenient  
16 and lengthy process that deters many potential visitors to the  
17 United States; and  
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19           WHEREAS, one solution to ease this problem is for a country  
20 to be admitted into the United States Visa Waiver Program, which  
21 allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the United  
22 States for tourism- or business-related purposes for as long as  
23 ninety days without a visa; and  
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25           WHEREAS, to be admitted into the Visa Waiver Program, a  
26 country must meet various security and other requirements, such  
27 as enhanced law enforcement and security-related data sharing  
28 with the United States, timely reporting of lost or stolen  
29 passports, and the maintenance of high counterterrorism, law



1 enforcement, border control, and document security standards;  
2 and  
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4 WHEREAS, as of January 1, 2012, one hundred forty-four  
5 countries and territories grant Hong Kong Special Administrative  
6 Region passport holders either visa-free or visa-on-arrival  
7 treatment; and  
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9 WHEREAS, Hong Kong is currently not among the thirty-six  
10 countries allowed to participate in the United States Visa  
11 Waiver Program; and  
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13 WHEREAS, allowing Hong Kong to participate in the Visa  
14 Waiver Program would strengthen ties between the two countries,  
15 eliminate unnecessary barriers to travel, and stimulate business  
16 and tourism; now, therefore,  
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18 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
19 Twenty-sixth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
20 of 2012, that this body urges the United States Department of  
21 State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United  
22 States Attorney General to include Hong Kong in the United  
23 States Visa Waiver Program and ease visa restrictions and the  
24 visa application and approval process for business and tourist  
25 travelers with Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
26 passports; and  
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
29 Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the United States  
30 Department of State, the Secretary of the United States  
31 Department of Homeland Security, the United States Attorney  
32 General, the Secretary of the United States Department of  
33 Commerce, the members of Hawaii's congressional delegation, the  
34 Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism  
35 Authority, and the Director of Business, Economic Development  
36 and Tourism.  
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