



May 26, 2020

The Hon. Francis Rooney
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Rooney:

On behalf of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) and the nearly 100 ASTA members in Florida's 19th Congressional District, I am writing to thank you for the key role you played in prompting the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to rescind an arbitrary regulatory "blacklist" that blocks travel agencies from utilizing an exemption from federal overtime rules designed for retail businesses.

Though applicable to all industries on the blacklist, the DOL's May 19 action would have the same effect as your bipartisan bill, the Travel Advisor Retail Fairness Act (H.R. 2506), introduced in May 2019 and during the 115th Congress as the Travel Agent Retail Fairness Act (H.R. 2515), which directs the Secretary of Labor to revise its regulations to remove travel agencies from the partial list of establishments having no retail concept within 90 days.

We commend the Department of Labor for recognizing that travel advisors frequently work irregular hours to help clients facing travel disruptions, as seen most recently during the COVID crisis, and that travel agencies should have the same access to this exemption from the overtime rules as any other retail business. But we are especially grateful to you, Mr. Rooney, for taking up our cause in 2017 and giving the Department "political cover" to take this step. While sustaining their businesses through the coronavirus crisis is our members' primary focus right now, this welcome step will provide a measure of regulatory relief once business returns, saving travel agencies nationwide over \$22 million in liability for overtime costs every year.

Thanks to your leadership and the tireless work of your staff, travel agencies nationwide will be better able to control costs and serve clients once the COVID crisis passes. In particular, we want to thank your staff member Ken Clifford for his three-plus years of work on this issue.

On behalf of the more than 140,000 Americans who work at travel agencies across the country, please accept our heartfelt thanks. If you or your staff have any questions on this or any issue related to the travel industry, please don't hesitate to contact me or Eben Peck, ASTA's Executive Vice President, Advocacy at (703) 739-6842 or epeck@asta.org.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zane Kerby", is written over a light blue circular background.

Zane Kerby
President and Chief Executive Officer

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ASTA.org TravelSense.org