

## House Approves Legislation to Promote U.S. Tourism, Combat Fraudulent Calling Cards

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation yesterday under suspension of the rules that would promote tourism to the United States and protect consumers from purchasing fraudulent calling cards. The legislation was approved in a Committee on Energy and Commerce markup on September 23, 2008.

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“I applaud my colleagues for working in a bipartisan manner on these important bills,” said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. “Improving foreign perceptions of our country and protecting consumers from deceptive and abusive marketing practices are critical to restoring our international reputation and strengthening consumer confidence.”

H.R. 3232, the “Travel Promotion Act of 2007,” sponsored by Rep. William D. Delahunt (D-MA) and Roy Blunt (R-MO), would create a non-profit corporation to encourage U.S. travel. The Corporation for Travel Promotion would provide useful information to international travelers, as well as identify and address perceptions in other countries regarding U.S. entry policies.

H.R.

3402, the "The Calling Card Consumer Protection Act," sponsored by Rep. Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), along with original co-sponsors Reps. Mike Ferguson (R-NJ) and Ed Towns (D-NY), would protect consumers who purchase calling cards by combating widespread abusive and deceptive marketing practices, such as hidden charges and incorrect advertising of the number of calling minutes on a card. It requires clear and conspicuous disclosure of all fees, minutes, and limitations on prepaid calling cards and services. Additionally, it provides for enforcement by State attorneys general and public utility commissions and authorizes the FTC to enforce violations and penalties.

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"No

matter which population is served or where they are sold, these fraudulent calling cards all have common themes: they misrepresent or outright lie to consumers about the rates, charges and terms that apply to their products," said Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-IL), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection. "This is a good bill that will go a long way towards protecting American consumers from calling card fraud."

For additional information, including details from the September 23, 2008 markup, please visit the Committee on Energy and Commerce website.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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