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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20528

Commissioner Rodney S. Scott
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C., 20229

Dear Secretary Noem and Commissioner Scott:

I write in strong opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) regarding Arrival and Departure Record (Form I-94) and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), published in the Federal Register on December 10, 2025. While I recognize the Department's responsibility to protect our nation's borders, I am deeply concerned that the proposed expansion of data collection requirements risks imposing unnecessary burdens on lawful international travelers and could have disproportionate economic consequences for the State of Hawai'i.

Travel and tourism remain the primary economic driver for Hawai'i. Because of its geographic isolation and limited economic diversification, lawful domestic and international travel is foundational to our fiscal stability, workforce participation and small business ecosystem. In 2025, Hawai'i welcomed approximately 9.6 million visitors and Honolulu's industry and visitor spending generated \$12 billion in economic activity, supported 64,000 jobs and contributed \$1.9 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue.

International travel remains an important component of Hawaii's visitor industry. While overall visitor spending has increased, key international markets remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels. As Hawai'i continues its recovery and works to rebuild these relationships, maintaining a predictable and efficient entry process for lawful travelers is critical to supporting jobs, small businesses and public revenues across our islands.

The NPRM's proposed requirement that ESTA applicants disclose five years of social media identifiers, extensive historical contact information, detailed biographical information about family members and expanded biometric identifiers represents a fundamental shift in the entry process for lawful travelers. While security enhancements are important, the breadth of these requirements risks creating a perception of complexity, intrusiveness and unpredictability.

For a destination as remote as Hawai'i, where international visitors must already undertake long-haul travel, even marginal deterrent effects can have disproportionate economic consequences for our state. Tourism supports tens of thousands of local jobs, sustains small businesses across our islands, and generates critical public revenues that fund essential services. At a time when our visitor industry is continuing its recovery, any federal policy that meaningfully alters the entry process should be carefully calibrated to strengthen security without unintentionally discouraging lawful travel.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Department to reconsider and revise this proposal to ensure that enhanced security measures are narrowly tailored and do not unintentionally deter lawful travel. I further request meaningful consultation with Hawaii's state and local leaders, hospitality industry representatives and economic stakeholders before finalizing any changes to ESTA or I-94 requirements.

With aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Case". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ed Case
Member of Congress