



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Brand USA, Online Booking Scams, & Illegal Hotels Top Hotel Industry's Agenda in Washington**

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sep. 11 – AAHOA and the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) kicked off the fifth Legislative Action Summit yesterday as hoteliers and hospitality industry representatives convened in Washington for two days of legislative briefings and meetings with lawmakers.

The hospitality industry supports 8.3 million American jobs. With nearly \$660 billion in economic output and \$186 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, the industry is a vital economic contributor in communities across the country. On Wednesday, AAHOA and AHLA members met with their lawmakers to advocate on three issues: the reauthorization of Brand USA; congressional action on online booking scams; and empowering localities to combat illegal hotels that advertise on short-term rental platforms.

“We are excited to share the stories of success and opportunity from the hospitality industry with our representatives in Congress,” said Rachel Humphrey, interim president and CEO of AAHOA. “When the hotel industry speaks with one voice, our lawmakers listen. AAHOA is proud to partner with AHLA. Our advocacy efforts on behalf of our employees, our businesses, and our industry have never been stronger. This week, we’ll be talking with Congress about the vital role Brand USA plays in attracting international travelers to our nation’s great destinations, how to combat the deceptive practices of online booking scammers, and how they can empower state and local governments to regulate short-term rentals.”

“Hotels make dreams come true every day—not just for our guests, but the 1 in 25 Americans whose jobs we support,” said Chip Rogers, president and CEO of AHLA. “Hotels in every congressional district are vital to the strength of communities and a major driver of the economy. We look forward to bringing our story of opportunity and success to Capitol Hill this week, helping lawmakers understand what makes us unique as an industry and the policies that will help us continue to grow.”

On Tuesday, Reps. Ralph Norman (R-SC) and Ami Bera (D-CA) participated in a panel discussion that covered a range of issues including the efficacy of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the hospitality industry’s one million employee labor shortage, and bipartisanship in Congress. Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL) addressed the impact that small businesses, such as hotels, have on local economies as well as legislation, such as the Save Local Business Act, that addresses inconsistencies in the joint employer standard.

Today, summit attendees met with lawmakers after a morning briefing and address from Rep. Ed Case (D-HI).

The lodging industry continues on a strong growth trajectory, with sales up 43.5 percent since 2010 and 1.3 billion guests staying in U.S. hotels each year. Hotels have added 160,000 jobs directly on property since 2015.

**About AAHOA:**

*AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The over 18,500 AAHOA members own almost one in every two hotels in the United States. With billions of dollars in property assets and hundreds of thousands of employees, AAHOA members are core economic contributors in virtually every community. AAHOA is a proud defender of free enterprise and the foremost current-day example of realizing the American dream.*

**About AHLA:**

*Serving the hospitality industry for more than a century, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) is the sole national association representing all segments of the U.S. lodging industry. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., AHLA focuses on strategic advocacy, communications support and educational resources for an industry that supports 8 million jobs. Learn more at [www.ahla.com](http://www.ahla.com).*

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