

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 407

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish the Virgin Islands visa waiver program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 2019

Ms. PLASKETT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish the Virgin Islands visa waiver program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Virgin Islands Visa
5 Waiver Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. VIRGIN ISLANDS VISA WAIVER PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 212(l) of the Immigration
8 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(l)) is amended—

9 (1) by amending the subsection heading to read
10 as follows: “GUAM, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS,

1 AND VIRGIN ISLANDS VISA WAIVER PROGRAMS.—”;

2 and

3 (2) by adding at the end the following:

4 “(7) VIRGIN ISLANDS VISA WAIVER PRO-
5 GRAM.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The requirement of
7 subsection (a)(7)(B)(i) may be waived by the
8 Secretary of Homeland Security, in the case of
9 an alien who is a national of a country de-
10 scribed in subparagraph (B) and who is apply-
11 ing for admission as a nonimmigrant visitor for
12 business or pleasure and solely for entry into
13 and stay in the United States Virgin Islands for
14 a period not to exceed 30 days, if the Secretary
15 of Homeland Security, after consultation with
16 the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of
17 State, and the Governor of the United States
18 Virgin Islands, determines that such a waiver
19 does not represent a threat to the welfare, safe-
20 ty, or security of the United States or its terri-
21 tories and commonwealths.

22 “(B) COUNTRIES.—A country described in
23 this subparagraph is a country that—

1 “(i) is a member or an associate mem-
2 ber of the Caribbean Community
3 (CARICOM); and

4 “(ii) is listed in the regulations de-
5 scribed in subparagraph (D).

6 “(C) ALIEN WAIVER OF RIGHTS.—An alien
7 may not be provided a waiver under this para-
8 graph unless the alien has waived any right—

9 “(i) to review or appeal under this Act
10 an immigration officer’s determination as
11 to the admissibility of the alien at the port
12 of entry into the United States Virgin Is-
13 lands; or

14 “(ii) to contest, other than on the
15 basis of an application for withholding of
16 removal under section 241(b)(3) of this
17 Act or under the Convention Against Tor-
18 ture, or an application for asylum if per-
19 mitted under section 208, any action for
20 removal of the alien.

21 “(D) REGULATIONS.—All necessary regu-
22 lations to implement this paragraph shall be
23 promulgated by the Secretary of Homeland Se-
24 curity, in consultation with the Secretary of the
25 Interior and the Secretary of State, on or be-

1 fore the date that is 1 year after the date of en-
2 actment of the Virgin Islands Visa Waiver Act
3 of 2019. The promulgation of such regulations
4 shall be considered a foreign affairs function for
5 purposes of section 553(a) of title 5, United
6 States Code. At a minimum, such regulations
7 should include, but not necessarily be limited
8 to—

9 “(i) a listing of all member or asso-
10 ciate member countries of the Caribbean
11 Community (CARICOM) whose nationals
12 may obtain, on a country by country basis,
13 the waiver provided by this paragraph, ex-
14 cept that such regulations shall not provide
15 for a listing of any country if the Secretary
16 of Homeland Security determines that
17 such country’s inclusion on such list would
18 represent a threat to the welfare, safety, or
19 security of the United States or its terri-
20 tories and commonwealths; and

21 “(ii) any bonding requirements for na-
22 tionals of some or all of those countries
23 who may present an increased risk of
24 overstays or other potential problems, if

1 different from such requirements otherwise
2 provided by law for nonimmigrant visitors.

3 “(E) FACTORS.—In determining whether
4 to grant or continue providing the waiver under
5 this paragraph to nationals of any country, the
6 Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation
7 with the Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-
8 retary of State, shall consider all factors that
9 the Secretary deems relevant, including elec-
10 tronic travel authorizations, procedures for re-
11 porting lost and stolen passports, repatriation
12 of aliens, rates of refusal for nonimmigrant vis-
13 itor visas, overstays, exit systems, and informa-
14 tion exchange.

15 “(F) SUSPENSION.—The Secretary of
16 Homeland Security shall monitor the admission
17 of nonimmigrant visitors to the United States
18 Virgin Islands under this paragraph. If the Sec-
19 retary determines that such admissions have re-
20 sulted in an unacceptable number of visitors
21 from a country remaining unlawfully in the
22 United States Virgin Islands, unlawfully obtain-
23 ing entry to other parts of the United States,
24 or seeking withholding of removal or asylum, or
25 that visitors from a country pose a risk to law

1 enforcement or security interests of the United
2 States Virgin Islands or of the United States
3 (including the interest in the enforcement of the
4 immigration laws of the United States), the
5 Secretary shall suspend the admission of na-
6 tionals of such country under this paragraph.
7 The Secretary of Homeland Security may in the
8 Secretary's discretion suspend the United
9 States Virgin Islands visa waiver program at
10 any time, on a country-by-country basis, for
11 other good cause.

12 “(G) ADDITION OF COUNTRIES.—The Gov-
13 ernor of the United States Virgin Islands may
14 request the Secretary of the Interior and the
15 Secretary of Homeland Security to add a par-
16 ticular country to the list of countries whose
17 nationals may obtain the waiver provided by
18 this paragraph, and the Secretary of Homeland
19 Security may grant such request after consulta-
20 tion with the Secretary of the Interior and the
21 Secretary of State, and may promulgate regula-
22 tions with respect to the inclusion of that coun-
23 try and any special requirements the Secretary
24 of Homeland Security, in the Secretary's sole
25 discretion, may impose prior to allowing nation-

1 als of that country to obtain the waiver pro-
2 vided by this paragraph.”.

3 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

4 (1) DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section
5 212(a)(7)(iii) of the Immigration and Nationality
6 Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(7)(iii)) is amended to read as
7 follows:

8 “(iii) SPECIAL VISA WAIVER PRO-
9 GRAMS.—For a provision authorizing waiv-
10 er of clause (i) in the case of visitors to
11 Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern
12 Mariana Islands, or the United States Vir-
13 gin Islands, see subsection (l).”.

14 (2) ADMISSION OF NONIMMIGRANTS.—Section
15 214(a)(1) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(a)(1)) is
16 amended by inserting before the final sentence the
17 following: “No alien admitted to the United States
18 Virgin Islands without a visa pursuant to section
19 212(l)(7) may be authorized to enter or stay in the
20 United States other than in the United States Vir-
21 gin Islands or to remain in the United States Vir-
22 gin Islands for a period exceeding 30 days from date of
23 admission to the United States Virgin Islands.”.

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