



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS // // // //

2024 Policy Handbook ...

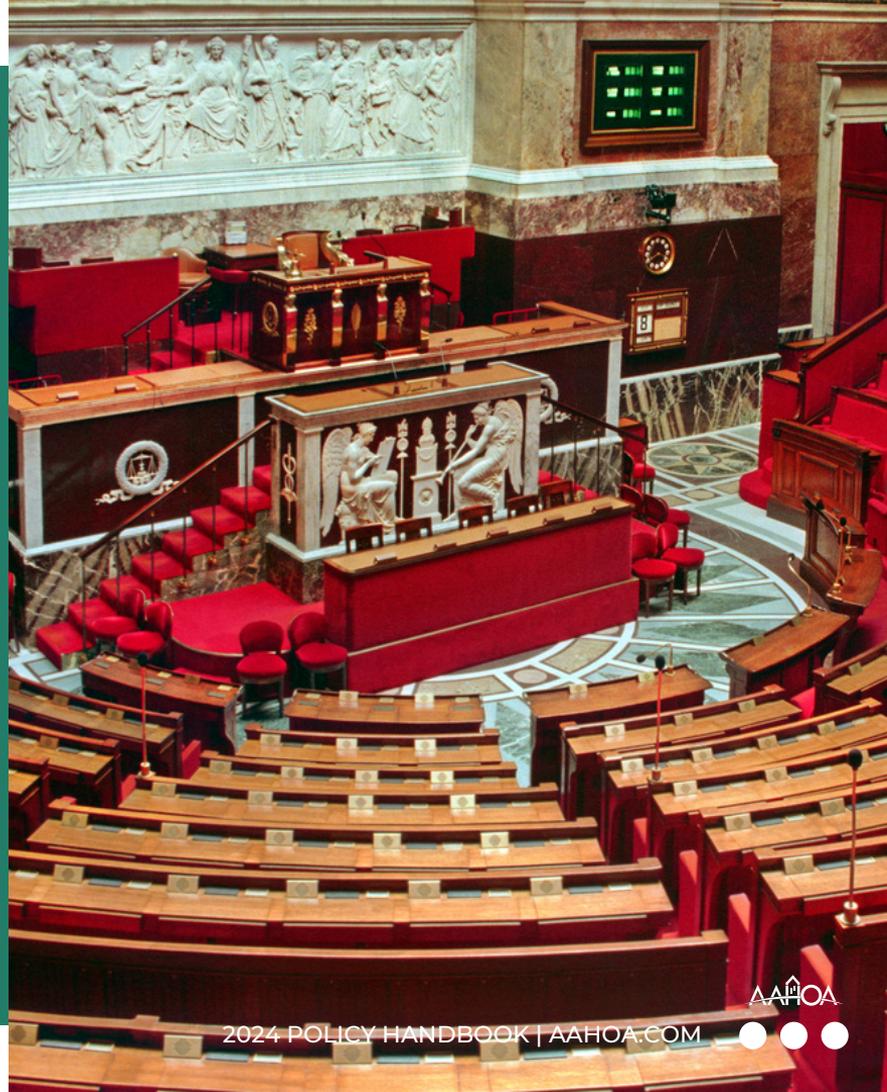
INTRODUCTION

As the U.S. gears up for a major election year, the 118th Congress and state legislatures nationwide are convening for legislative sessions in 2024.

From the Capitol to capitals coast to coast, learn more about how AAHOA engages with elected officials to protect the business interests of America's hoteliers.

We encourage you to get involved and make advocacy an integral part of your business plan.

● ● ● **Let's Get Started**



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



“

**EVERY AAHOA MEMBER
HAS A STORY TO TELL,
AND ONLY YOU CAN
TELL IT BEST. LET YOUR
VOICE BE HEARD.**

”





FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



PROMOTING ACCESS TO CAPITAL BY INCREASING SBA LOAN CAPS/LIMITS

Obtaining access to capital is critical for small businesses to operate and thrive in a challenging economy. Currently, Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) and 504 loans are capped at \$5 million, which was last set in 2010. For hoteliers, the costs of constructing and purchasing properties have skyrocketed over the past decade.

Many hoteliers use SBA 7(a) and 504 loans to help finance the new construction or purchase of their hotel properties. Since the value of the hotels is significantly higher than current loan limits, there remains substantial collateral for higher loan amounts. Congress can significantly assist small businesses by increasing the SBA loan limits to match the current economic conditions and thereby create a sustainable business model for the future.



**CALL TO ACTION: INCREASE SBA 7(A) AND 504
LOAN LIMITS FROM \$5 MILLION TO \$10 MILLION**



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



SUPPORTING THE *CREDIT CARD COMPETITION ACT* (S. 1838/H.R. 3881)

Credit and debit card swipe fees have more than doubled over the past decade and soared \$22 billion last year to a record \$160.7 billion. As these fees continue to rise, AAHOA Members know exactly how much they affect our bottom line.

The bipartisan *Credit Card Competition Act* (S. 1838/H.R. 3881) was introduced to bring competition to the credit card network routing market. Under the legislation, a credit card would be required to have more than one network option on which to route financial data. That would make networks compete over fees, security, and service and is expected to save merchants, like AAHOA Members and their customers, \$15 billion a year.



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

CONTINUED

SUPPORTING THE CREDIT CARD COMPETITION ACT (S. 1838/H.R. 3881)

To advocate for our members, AAHOA recently joined the Merchants Payments Coalition (MPC). The MPC is a group of retailers, supermarkets, restaurants, drug stores, convenience stores, gas stations, online merchants, and other businesses focused on reforming the U.S. payments system to make it more transparent and competitive. The MPC firmly believes in opening up the payments market and introducing competition, which, in turn, would lower costs and drive innovation.

Visa and Mastercard – which control more than 80% of the market – currently price-fix swipe fees charged by banks that issue cards under their brands and also block transactions from being processed over other networks that could do the job with lower fees and better security.



CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT THE CREDIT CARD COMPETITION ACT (S. 1838/H.R. 3881)





FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act, H.R. 3734

The U.S. economy faces severe labor shortages that are straining our economic recovery. The latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data show 10 million job openings but only 5.7 million unemployed workers. Employers weathering supply constraints and record inflation are forced to operate their businesses at reduced capacity due to a lack of labor. To address these shortages, the *Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act* will create a market-driven immigration visa program targeted to workers in occupations that do not require a college degree to do year-round, non-farm work. The bill creates a two-track system in which employers and potential immigrant laborers are both required to receive a permit to work in the U.S. The bill will require an employer to apply to the federal government for approval to hire an H-2C worker and does not allow a worker to enter the U.S. until they have been affirmatively hired by an employer that has received approval from the government to hire for that position. These employees are only ever allowed to work for an approved employer, at the approved location, in the specific job that was approved.



**CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT THE ESSENTIAL WORKERS
FOR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT ACT, H.R. 3734**

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FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

The SEASONAL Act, S. 2705

The *State Executive Authority for Seasonal Occupations Needing Additional Labor (SEASONAL) Act* is bipartisan legislation enabling governors to petition the federal government for supplemental H-2B visas beyond the national cap of 66,000. If enacted, governors of states at or below 3.5% unemployment would have the authority to request visas as broadly as the entire state or as narrow as specific labor categories or specific economic regions, enabling state-level attention to their specific economic needs. Governors would have to certify that there is a persistent, unmet need for labor in their states and that supplemental H-2B visas will not displace domestic workers or negatively affect average wages in the state. Nothing in the bill would prohibit a state legislature from imposing limits on a governor's requests. Federal inaction shouldn't hold back states from serving the needs of their economies. Further, easing labor shortages would increase productivity and mitigate supply constraints that are contributing to inflation. Focusing on legal, nonimmigrant pathways to work in the country may also curb economic pressures that drive many working-age individuals to seek illegal entry into the country.



CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT THE SEASONAL ACT, S. 2705

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ADVANCING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



The Small Business Administration

AAHOA has strengthened its strategic relationship with the Small Business Administration to improve access to capital and implement new relief programs.



The Federal Trade Commission

AAHOA has developed connections in the Federal Trade Commission to address transparency issues related to franchise fees and online travel agency market dominance.





STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

“
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE, IN SOME RESPECTS, A MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING THAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
”

States and local governments pass 40,000 or more new laws every year. These laws can drastically impact AAHOA Member businesses, which is why AAHOA’s dedicated state and local Government Affairs Team works around the clock to promote and protect the business interests of America’s hoteliers.



TOP ISSUES FOR 2024

Issues vary from state to state, yet our team works to address the following consistently across the board:

- Addressing the Homelessness Crisis
- Promoting Short-Term Rental (STR) Regulation
- Clarifying and Maintaining Innkeeper/Guest Relationships
- Supporting Lodging Tax Dollars Only for Tourism
- Combatting Human Trafficking

● ● ● **Let's Get Started**





STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

ADDRESSING THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS



AAHOA OPPOSES COMPULSORY HOUSING VOUCHERS OR PROGRAMS DIRECTED TOWARD HOTELS AS MECHANISMS PURPORTING TO RESOLVE THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS.

The utilization of hotels as a mandatory solution for sheltering unhoused individuals is inadequate, insufficient and could potentially lead to unstable conditions for the individuals and other guests. Hotel housing programs fail to substantively address the underlying causes of homelessness, including the lack of affordable housing, mental health support, and rehab services. AAHOA strives to continue working with state and local partners to find solutions for the ongoing housing crisis.



STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



PROMOTING SHORT-TERM RENTAL (STR) REGULATION



AAHOA SUPPORTS STR PARITY, DATA TRANSPARENCY, AND A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.

STRs are largely unregulated accommodations that frequently are not held to the same standards and regulations imposed on hotels. This creates unfair and unfavorable challenges for hotels seeking to serve the traveling public and potentially unsafe conditions for guests. AAHOA urges policymakers to implement and enforce uniform and standard regulations that ensure STR parity, data transparency, and a level playing field. Such regulations will ensure the safety, quality, and accountability of lodging options for the traveling public, regardless of whether they are staying in a hotel or an Airbnb/Vrbo rental home.





STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



CLARIFYING AND MAINTAINING INNKEEPER/GUEST RELATIONSHIPS



AAHOA AIMS TO SUPPORT AND FURTHER DEFINE THE INNKEEPER/GUEST RELATIONSHIP BY (1) CLARIFYING “GUEST” VS. “TENANT” IN STATE AND LOCAL LAWS AND (2) ADDING HOTEL GUESTS WHO OVERSTAY THEIR RESERVATIONS WITHOUT PAYING TO TRESPASSER DEFINITIONS.

Some states do not clearly define when hotel guests become tenants. This legal ambiguity places burdens on both hoteliers and guests. When guests overstay without paying, hoteliers need clear laws that support prompt and lawful removal.



STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



SUPPORTING LODGING TAX DOLLARS ONLY FOR TOURISM



AAHOA SUPPORTS THE REINVESTMENT OF TOURISM DOLLARS – WHICH HAVE BEEN RE-ALLOCATED FOR NON-TOURISM PROJECTS – BACK INTO TOURISM.

Many states and municipalities seek to raise lodging taxes and then use these tax dollars to fund non-tourism-related state and/or local projects. AAHOA supports the use of these lodging taxes only for tourism to bring more travelers to the local communities and benefit all related businesses, including hotels, tourist attractions, restaurants, gas stations, and other retail businesses. Tax dollars for tourism means a winning boost for all.





STATE & LOCAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA



COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



AAHOA SUPPORTS LEGISLATION THAT ADDRESSES HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE U.S. AND SEEKS INCLUSION IN ALL IMPORTANT HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONVERSATIONS AND TASK FORCES.

AAHOA has long been at the forefront of human trafficking education and prevention. Hotel owners and their employees are in a position to make a real difference in stopping human trafficking – but only if they know what signs to look for and how to respond best. AAHOA remains committed to empowering hotel owners and hospitality professionals to help keep trafficking out of their hotels and communities.



ABOUT AAHOA

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world, with Member-owned properties representing a significant part of the U.S. economy. AAHOA's 20,000 members own 60% of the hotels in the United States and are responsible for 1.7% of the nation's GDP. More than one million employees work at AAHOA Member-owned hotels, earning \$47 billion annually, and member-owned hotels support 4.2 million U.S. jobs across all sectors of the hospitality industry. AAHOA's mission is to advance and protect the business interests of hotel owners through advocacy, industry leadership, professional development, member benefits, and community engagement.



Stay in the Know with AAHOA Advocacy

The latest news related to our
advocacy efforts can be
accessed at
AAHOA.com/Broadcast.





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