

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 25, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice,

As we are sure you are aware, our constituents are experiencing severe delays in getting their passports. Our offices have been deluged with phone calls over the last few weeks from constituents who are being forced to stand in extremely long lines at passport offices, make repeated phone calls, and in many cases, do not get their passports in time to make their travel arrangements. Families are postponing or canceling vacations, students have been forced to forgo overseas studies, and trade is hampered because of the extremely slow processing of passports.

We understand the constraints on your time, but respectfully request that you work to resolve the current backlog of passport requests to ensure safe international travel for US citizens. The new rules requiring a passport to travel by air in the Western Hemisphere has undoubtedly increased the demand for the issuance of passports.

When our offices have called to inquire on the status of applications or to expedite the passport at the National Passport Information Center, we are being told to only call three days before the applicant needs the passport. Constituents waiting in line outside main offices in Houston have been turned away after being told that they will need to schedule an appointment, some who have submitted their applications over three months in advance of their travel. Clearly this situation is unacceptable.

We will do everything in our power to provide you with adequate funding to implement the new rules and requirements passed by Congress. Here are some questions we would like addressed so that we can work together to resolve our dilemma.

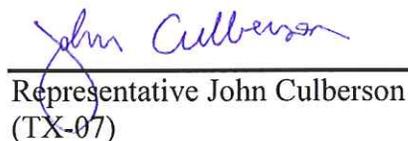
- What actions are being taken by you to improve the processing and customer service at the passport centers?
- What are your plans when passports are required for ground travel to and from Mexico?
- Will the State Department be ready to implement these new regulations when they come into effect?

We look forward to your response and stand ready to assist in anyway possible.

Sincerely,



Representative K. Michael Conaway
(TX-11)



Representative John Culberson
(TX-07)

Representative Kenny Marchant
(TX-24)

Representative Gene Green
(TX-29)

Representative Lamar S. Smith
(TX-21)

Representative Chet Edwards
(TX-17)

Representative Michael C. Burgess
(TX-26)

Representative Ralph M. Hall
(TX-04)

Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee
(TX-18)

Representative Jeb Hensarling
(TX-05)

Representative Ron Paul
(TX-14)

Representative Randy Neugebauer
(TX-19)

Representative John R. Carter
(TX-31)

Representative Pete Sessions
(TX-32)

Representative Solomon P. Ortiz
(TX-27)

Representative Kay Granger
(TX-12)

Sam Johnson

Representative Sam Johnson
(TX-03)