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Plaskett-Sponsored Legislation to Allow Caribbean Nationals to Travel to USVI Visa-Free Approved in House Judiciary Committee

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A measure sponsored by Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett that would allow Caribbean nationals to travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands without a visa was recently approved in the House Judiciary Committee, according to Ms. Plaskett's office.

Called the Virgin Islands Visa Waiver Act (H.R. 5460), the measure would allow the Department of Homeland Security to consider approving non-immigrant visitor visa waivers for entry into the U.S. Virgin Islands for up to 45 days (primarily for residents of neighboring Caribbean countries). Ms. Plaskett said a similar non-immigrant visitor visa waiver program is already being utilized successfully in both Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands for nationals of other countries.

“This legislation would extend this same program to the U.S. Virgin Islands. This limited visa waiver program would better enable the Virgin Islands to compete economically with other islands and nations in the Caribbean community,” Ms. Plaskett said. She said a nationwide U.S. Visa Waiver Program already allows nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa. The bill would apply solely to the U.S. Virgin Islands and because the Virgin Islands is outside the U.S. customs zone by law, it would not allow entry into any other part of the United States.

The measure must still face the full House and Senate.

“I and my team have worked steadfastly with the House Judiciary Committee over several years on the Virgin Islands Visa Waiver Act. I would like to thank my Republican colleague, Representative Thomas Massie from Kentucky for his vote in favor of this bill,” Ms. Plaskett said, thanking supporters of the measure. “I thank my colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee for their hard work during the marathon markup session that took place over the past few days.”

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