

Skål International USA Calls For Exemption For Travel Advisors In California



California Assembly Bill (AB) 5 strips away Independent Contract Status for Tourism Travel Advisors

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Aug. 12, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- The Skål USA members are very concerned by the possibility of Assembly Bill (AB) 5, in the California Legislature, will become law in October 2019. This could mean over 11,000 California Travel Advisors, who are working as Independent Contractors serving the Travel Industry, may be forced to lose or leave their jobs.

David Ryan, Vice-President of Membership for Skål International USA, and a member of Skål Sacramento, explains, "Our club (Skål Sacramento), has 18 Travel Advisors who will be directly affected if this bill passes. It would not only be devastating for the Skål members to lose their jobs, but the thousands of visitors they jointly offer California vacation packages could go away." According to California Tourism Association, California tourism industry generated around \$140 billion in spending in 2018.

Lisa Conway, Skål USA President, recently wrote in a letter to California state

senators, "Independent travel advisors - who are primarily women and are all small business owners - are an integral part of the travel industry. They have the freedom to set their own hours and schedules, set their own rates, select the customers with whom they will work and market their own brands. In its current form, Assembly Bill 5 puts this system, beneficial to agencies and independent advisors alike, at great risk."

"We are very concerned if this law passes in California, it may only be the beginning of this type of law throughout the United States, not only effecting the almost 300 travel advisors in Skål USA, but all of the other hospitality industry workers who support tourism," exclaimed Conway.

Eben Peck, Executive Vice President of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), who represents over 1,200 travel advisors in California and over 10,000 nationwide, stressed to California senators how important travel advisors are to both California and the country's travel industry. "California travel agencies contribute 11,353 jobs and \$575 million in direct economic impact to the state and are a critical part of the travel industry ecosystem," said Peck. "If AB 5 is enacted without amendment, it will be hugely disruptive to our industry in California and beyond. As anyone who works in the industry will tell you, independent contracting works for travel agencies, ICs and their clients alike, so we urge legislators to make sure the livelihood of these hard-working women and men is protected in the final bill."

Skål USA has asked the California legislators to amend Assembly Bill 5 to preserve the independent contractor model that has existed in the tourism hospitality industry for decades and provides opportunities for thousands of small business owners.

Conway further mentions in the letter, "As you (California Senator) consider Assembly Bill 5, it is critical that it be amended to clearly state that workers engaged to sell travel in our industry will be evaluated under the standard in place in California for nearly 30 years prior to the Dynamex decision. As the bill has moved through the legislature, similar exemptions have already been inserted for insurance agents, physicians, dentists, direct salespersons, real estate agents, barbers,

architects and others."

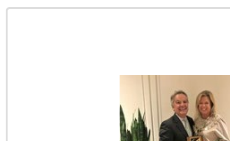
Skål International is a professional organization of tourism leaders around the world, promoting global tourism and friendship. It is the only international group uniting all branches of the travel and tourism industry. Skål International USA is the largest National Committee in Skål International with 2,000 members and 48 clubs nationwide, with 6 clubs in California – Los Angeles, Orange County, San Jose, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Lake Tahoe. SKÅL USA is an affiliate Member of the UNWTO, Supporter of ECPAT International, Member of ICTP, Partner of IIPT and Supports the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from exploitation in tourism.

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