

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

# Basham Press Release

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## **Basham Applauds House Action on Passport Fee Resolution**

*Resolution calls on Congress to reduce passport costs*

LANSING, Mich.-Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) applauded the House's passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 31 yesterday, which he sponsored alongside Representative Paul Opsommer (R-Dewitt). SCR 31 urges Congress to reduce the price of traditional passports by directly lowering the cost to consumers or by offering fully refundable federal income tax deductions.

"Tourism and travel are important parts of our local, state and national economy," said Basham. "With stricter passport requirements and a \$100 plus price tag, we are ultimately discouraging our citizens from traveling. This resolution aims to ease this issue by lowering the high costs of passports."

SCR 31 was introduced in response to the pending June 2009 implementation of federal law requiring a passport for all ground crossings, including re-entry into the United States from Canada or Mexico. In addition, a Congressional investigation into passport costs has indicated that the U.S. State Department is overcharging more than \$100 million a year for these passports.

"These passport requirements have a significant affect on Michigan as residents are used to traveling back and forth between the Canadian border for work as well as travel with simply a drivers license or birth certificate," said Basham. "It is my hope that we can not only make passports more affordable, but also keep the federal government more accountable for the fees they charge."

Basham and Opsommer have been working on this issue and other Western Hemisphere Trade Initiative issues for some time and recently worked together to successfully pass a similar resolution at the National Conference of State Legislators annual policy conference this summer.

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