

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2024

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

In Re: Establishment of a Passport Agency in Tennessee

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We are writing to express our profound disappointment that Tennessee was not included in the list of states selected for a new passport agency, as announced in your June 18, 2024 press release. As U.S. Representatives from the great state of Tennessee, we strongly believe that our state deserves consideration for a passport agency, and we urge you to reconsider the Department's decision.

Despite the addition of six new passport agencies, Tennesseans will still face significant travel burdens to access these services. From Nashville, TN, the closest agencies will be in Cincinnati, OH (4.5 hours), Charlotte, NC (6.5 hours), Atlanta, GA (4 hours), and Hot Springs, AR (6 hours). This is unacceptable, especially considering the urgent circumstances that many of our constituents face when seeking a passport. Our caseworkers regularly encounter individuals who require expedited passport services, and it is incredibly difficult to advise them to travel such long distances.

Nashville's central location makes it an ideal site for a future passport agency. Our state's geographic position would allow for easier access to passport services for Tennesseans and citizens from neighboring states. We believe that establishing a passport agency in Tennessee would greatly benefit the region and align with the Department's goal of providing prompt customer service to more Americans.

In light of this, we would appreciate it if you could provide answers to the following questions regarding the selection criteria used to choose the newest passport offices:

- What specific factors were considered when selecting the locations for the six new passport agencies?
- How did the Department weigh the need for passport services in each state and region?
- Were there any specific metrics or data points used to determine the demand for passport services in each location?
- How did the Department consider the travel burdens and distances that citizens would need to undertake to access passport services?
- Were there any alternative locations considered in the Southeastern United States, and if so, why were they not selected?

We hope that you will reconsider the Department's decision and give Tennessee the opportunity to host a passport agency. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

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John Rose
Member of Congress



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



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