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## U.S. REMOVES VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR FOREIGN ARTISTS AND ATHLETES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today welcomed legislation passed by Congress on November 27, revising provisions of the U.S. Immigration Act that threatened to restrict entry into the United States by foreign entertainers and professional athletes.

"I am pleased that the revised provisions address almost every concern raised by the Canadian sports and entertainment communities," said Mrs. McDougall. "Our Consulates in the United States and the Canadian Embassy in Washington closely tracked this legislation through Congress and intervened to ensure that Canadian interests were protected."

Among other provisions, the new Bill removes the annual cap or quota for foreign performers (originally proposed at 25,000). It allows for up to 25 per cent of a company's membership to have less than one-year's affiliation with the group (originally all members had to have one year's affiliation), and it eliminates the requirement that groups remain outside the U.S. for three months before accepting another engagement.

President Bush is expected to sign the Bill within the next 10 days. Regulations for implementation will then be developed before these amended provisions come into force in April 1992.

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