

SBL SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Travel Visa Statement

The participation of non-US members in the SBL Annual Meeting has grown considerably. This has created a rich exchange of ideas and relationships—a value to every member and to the Society as a whole. SBL continues to do everything it can to broaden participation and enrich this experience in order for us to foster international biblical scholarship.

We also recognize that non-US citizens traveling to the United States are facing changing travel guidelines. As the situation evolves, we urge all attendees to inquire about visa requirements in relation to their home countries. The following are important links to information on visa resources and processes:

- [US Visas](#)
- [US Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)](#)
- [US Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#)
- [SBL Annual Meeting Registration Page](#)

Annual Meeting registrants who do not hold a US passport and intend to travel as part of the Visa Waiver Program should note the following:

1. According to current US Government advice, **dual nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen are not anymore considered eligible to take part in the Visa Waiver Program** even if they hold a first or second passport by a country that is part of the Visa Waiver Program.
2. Furthermore, and this may be much less well known, **anyone who has merely travelled to one of the above-mentioned countries after March 1, 2011 is also considered ineligible to take part in the Visa Waiver Program** even if he/she does not hold dual nationality. An ESTA application submitted is likely to be declined.

(On both points, see e.g., <https://nl.usembassy.gov/visas/visa-waiver-program/>).

Thus, any registrant to whom (1) or (2) applies will need to submit a full visa application in order to travel to the Annual Meeting. This is a complex, costly, and time-consuming process that ought to be commenced immediately in order to ensure that travel to the US will be possible in November.

Finally, it is advised that those already granted permission before the new ESTA regulations **re-apply immediately**. We apologize for any inconvenience this will cause you.

Official letters of invitation to the Annual Meeting to support visa applications are available. Please indicate during registration in the “Letter of Invitation” portion if you would like to request a letter. If you have questions, you may e-mail annualmeeting@sbl-site.org after you have completed registration to obtain more details about the information required.

Please note that SBL will fully refund registration fees with no penalty to SBL members in good standing whose visa applications are denied or who are otherwise restricted from entering the United States. For full refund, members must provide a copy of the visa rejection.

SBL is doing everything it can to help its members and ensure a safe and fruitful meeting in Boston. Should you have any further questions please write annualmeeting@sbl-site.org.

Sincerely,

John F. Kutsko
Executive Director