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February 5, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Members of the 116th Congress
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Trump and Members of the 116th Congress,

As major employers in all 50 states – collectively representing more than 15 million people – Business Roundtable CEOs are eager to partner with you to address opportunities and challenges facing the U.S. economy and workers.

The United States enters 2019 with an economy that is strong and growing. Successful policies on tax reform and regulatory relief have bolstered economic optimism, boosted job creation and wage growth and stimulated significant new investments in America's communities.

Business leaders support the agreement between Congress and the Administration on a measure to fund the government through February 15. Policymakers should now deliver a longer-term funding proposal that ends stop-and-start government and returns focus to maximizing opportunity for all Americans.

To move our nation forward, Business Roundtable CEOs see six important areas where business and government can work together to address policy challenges and advance bipartisan economic priorities:

Increase Education and Career Opportunities for America's Workforce

A diverse and talented U.S. workforce is essential to growing the U.S. economy. Through the Business Roundtable [Workforce Partnership Initiative](#), CEOs are partnering with education and community leaders to accelerate and expand best-in-class workforce readiness programs in key regions around the country.

Action is needed on policies to strengthen education and training pipelines so America's youth and working adults can secure fulfilling jobs and build sustainable career paths. The 116th Congress and the Administration can start by reauthorizing the Higher Education Act and incorporating key improvements to increase access to high-quality, affordable education and on-the-job training for America's students and workers.

Secure and Sustain U.S. Leadership on Innovation

U.S. leadership on innovation creates opportunities for America's workers and communities, and increases the overall standard of living in our country. While the United States is now the global leader in innovation, the world is changing rapidly and other nations are making significant investments to spearhead the next generation of technological breakthroughs. More than ever, America needs a cross-cutting national innovation agenda to ensure the United States remains the global innovation leader across all sectors.

Business Roundtable has offered such an [agenda](#), putting forth policy recommendations centered on several key principles, including: investing in people to build a world-class workforce, pursuing inclusive innovation to ensure economic gains are shared broadly in our society, making strategic investments in science and technology and removing regulatory roadblocks to technological progress. Through innovation, the United States can achieve sustainable, long-term economic growth that increases prosperity and leads to a higher standard of living for all Americans.

Protect Consumer Data Privacy

While the rise of the digital economy has created significant opportunities, our nation's data privacy laws have failed to keep pace with consumer expectations. Too many Americans feel they have too little control over how their personal data is collected, used, shared and protected. At the same time, an increasingly fragmented patchwork of state and local privacy laws has created confusion and eroded public trust, hurting both consumers and companies.

With input from companies in every key industry sector as well as state and federal lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, Business Roundtable has put forward a detailed [framework](#) for national privacy legislation that seeks to establish and protect core consumer privacy rights, promote innovation and reduce fragmentation. Broad bipartisan support clearly exists for enacting a national privacy law and it's time to address this important issue.

Rebuild and Renew America's Infrastructure

Once a signature economic advantage for the United States, our nation's infrastructure is now a significant impediment to sustained U.S. economic growth and competitiveness. The costs of failing to address our deficient roads, bridges, ports and waterways are only growing larger. Inadequate infrastructure costs American businesses \$27 billion per year in added transportation costs; congestion on major urban roadways costs the average U.S. commuter \$960 annually.

A new Business Roundtable [study](#) shows that an additional investment of \$700 billion to \$800 billion over the next 10 years – utilizing a combination of federal, state, local and private funding sources – would add \$1,400 in annual disposable income for the average U.S. household and create 1.1 million additional new jobs. In fact, every \$1 invested in infrastructure drives roughly \$3.70 in additional economic growth. The 116th Congress should take this opportunity to shore up America's economic foundation by making a significant, sustained investment in U.S. public infrastructure systems through public and private engagement.

Modernize the U.S. Immigration System

Republicans and Democrats agree that our nation's immigration system is broken. The 116th Congress should take action on [policies](#) that will expand pathways for legal immigrants to contribute to our communities while also improving security and enforcement to keep our nation safe.

Congress and the Administration should also deliver a permanent solution for undocumented immigrants living in America – children, in particular. In many cases, these immigrants are employers, employees, students, families and members of our military who are already contributing greatly to our country and our economy. Business leaders want a practical solution that will allow them to continue doing so.

Expand Economic Opportunity through Free and Fair Trade

U.S. trade supports more than 36 million American jobs – nearly one in five. America's leadership in international trade also supports U.S. innovation leadership, expands economic growth and generates a higher standard of living across the country. Business leaders see several important trade fronts where policymakers can strengthen rules-based international trade for the benefit of U.S. businesses, workers and consumers.

The Administration and Congress should work together to open new markets for American goods and services and remove barriers to trade and investment, including unilateral tariffs that have drawn retaliation and have harmed American competitiveness and working families. Business Roundtable will work with Congress and the Administration to preserve and strengthen trilateral trade and investment in North America, and successfully advance the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. We also support the Administration's effort to negotiate reforms with China to [address long-standing issues](#) and to de-escalate economic tensions. The Administration should also continue working with trusted U.S. allies and trading partners to support reforms in China and to strengthen the World Trade Organization. Moving forward on all these fronts, and removing rather than adding barriers to trade and investment, will strengthen the U.S. economy and provide greater economic opportunity for workers, families and communities.

While the United States faces a number of pressing policy challenges, we also enter the new Congress with many opportunities. Divided government does not have to mean dysfunctional government – especially with so many areas of bipartisan agreement. America's business leaders are ready and eager to work with policymakers on both sides of the aisle. We appreciate your consideration of these policy priorities and look forward to partnering with you in the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,



Joshua Bolten
President & CEO
Business Roundtable