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Joshua Bolten
Business Roundtable

October 31, 2019

The Honorable Brian Schatz
U.S. Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee
U.S. Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schatz, Lee and Durbin:

On behalf of nearly 200 CEO members of Business Roundtable, I am writing to express support for your bipartisan effort to reverse the current ban on incarcerated individuals having access to Pell Grants. This goal would be accomplished through S. 1074, the Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act of 2019.

This legislation recognizes that a vast majority of incarcerated adults will re-enter their communities needing to find employment. At the same time, many of these same individuals lack the skills necessary to participate in the workforce upon their re-entry. Your legislation removes a major obstacle facing many of these individuals seeking to gain these skills and find a new path forward in life.

There is strong evidence this strategy works. A U.S. Department of Education pilot program, which involved over 10,000 inmates, demonstrated that the combined earnings of formerly incarcerated individuals provided access to Pell Grants increased by \$45 million during just the first year after leaving prison. Given these results, we are pleased to see that the Department is extending its Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites initiative.

Restoring Pell eligibility for incarcerated individuals not only helps individuals find employment and remain out of prison but can also help meet the growing demand for skilled labor facing many of our companies across the country.

October 31, 2019

Page 2

We applaud your bipartisan effort to address this issue and look forward to working with you to ensure passage of the REAL Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joshua Bolten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "B".

Joshua Bolten
President & CEO
Business Roundtable

C: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions