

May 18, 2020

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and
Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the CEO members of Business Roundtable who lead
companies with collectively more than 15 million employees, we
write to express our appreciation for your bipartisan measures to
address the COVID-19 pandemic and to deliver much-needed
assistance, especially to those most vulnerable.

Business Roundtable companies, in partnership with Congress, the
Administration and state and local governments, are taking action
to ensure the health and safety of American workers and
consumers. Our companies are adopting new workplace safety
measures; developing new diagnostic tools and treatments;
providing facilities for testing; procuring and producing critical
medical equipment; and contributing expertise, financial resources
and supplies across the country.

We appreciate the swift actions Congress and the Administration
have taken to support public health and to respond to severe
disruptions to employment and the economy. Still, we know there
is so much more to do. It has become clear that further action will
be required to support individuals and families, sustain our
comprehensive health care system and assist frontline health care
workers, support states and municipalities, and protect jobs.

The House approved another phase of COVID-19 response
legislation on May 15. We now encourage the House and Senate to
come together on legislation that delivers additional relief, brings a
rapid end to the public health crisis and restores the country's
economy. Public and private sector coordination is critical to
continued progress, and America's largest employers are
committed to working with policymakers to accomplish these goals.
Below we have outlined measures we believe would contribute to a
more rapid and safe recovery.

Protect Jobs and Bring Americans Back to Work

We applaud steps taken by Congress to extend unemployment insurance and stem the tide of job loss. With unemployment claims exceeding 30 million over the past two months, Business Roundtable supports additional measures to address economic hardship faced by millions of seniors, children and other vulnerable Americans including:

- **Economic relief and a return-to-work incentive.** Business Roundtable supports continued unemployment insurance (UI) and other relief for individuals and families. To avoid UI and supplemental federal payments operating as a disincentive to work, especially in places where it exceeds market wages, Congress should consider accounting in UI for state market conditions and providing workers with a temporary return-to-work incentive to match the additional weekly unemployment benefit.
- **Employee retention and rehiring incentives.** Business Roundtable supports efforts to expand the new employee retention tax credit and urges Congress to consider additional incentives to offset the costs of rehired or newly added workers, especially for small business employers.
- **Investments in worker training.** Business Roundtable companies continue to support additional investments in direct, short-term training, including apprenticeships, federal work study and other on-the-job training, which will help the millions of recently unemployed workers re-enter the workforce. New funding should eliminate barriers to student attainment, for example, by encouraging transfer of credits.
- **Targeted protection against COVID-19 related liability.** Because the unprecedented nature of the pandemic creates substantial legal risks, which threaten a safe and effective return to work, Congress should provide narrowly tailored liability protection for employers that act responsibly to protect health and safety. Protections against COVID-19 exposure liability should include limitations on liability for employers that take reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of employees and customers and do not act recklessly or with willful disregard. Procedural protections, such as federal court jurisdiction, would also help ensure uniform standards and reduce costly non-meritorious litigation.

Support a Strong Public Health Response

Policymakers, public health officials and the private sector have together taken extraordinary steps to stop the spread of the virus and protect American lives. As states begin to reopen, Business Roundtable supports the following additional measures to ensure a safe and effective recovery:

- **Funding and privacy protections for testing and virus monitoring.** Congress should provide additional funding to support rapid expansion of testing capacity, deployment of widespread contact tracing and buildout of public health systems. Business Roundtable also calls for a uniform and robust set of privacy and security measures to protect individuals' personal data. (See Business Roundtable's detailed recommendations on funding for testing and virus monitoring and on privacy protection for personal COVID-19 data.)
- **Workplace tools to protect employees and customers.** Existing federal and state privacy laws may prevent businesses from implementing necessary health and safety measures, such as screening for symptoms. Congress should adopt time-

limited measures to enable businesses to implement responsible screening, testing, tracing and tracking. To ensure the continued availability of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies such as sanitizer, Congress should also provide targeted liability protection to manufacturers and others involved in filling supply gaps.

- **Funding for therapeutics and vaccines to address COVID-19.** Additional funding to support the research, development, manufacture and administration of safe and effective therapeutics and vaccines will be vital in bringing a rapid end to the public health crisis. Funding could be used to increase manufacturing capacity, fund advanced research and development, and train the public health workforce needed to administer these products.
- **Increased access to critical supplies and support for supply chain resilience.** Critical to protecting Americans and enabling a safe re-opening are access to more medical, PPE, testing and other COVID-19 supplies. To meet rising demand, Congress should advance policies that support greater domestic competitiveness, capacity, and capabilities; increase access to needed foreign inputs and supplies by suspending tariff costs, limiting export controls and keeping markets open; and improve supply chain diversification, stability and redundancy. Policymakers should avoid imposing broad supply chain mandates and other restrictions that would disrupt access to critical COVID-19 inputs and products, draw retaliation and undermine the public health response and safe economic recovery.

Promote a Stronger Economic Future

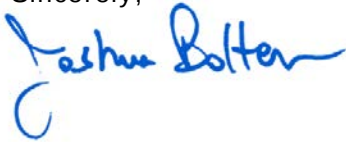
Congress, the Administration and the Federal Reserve have taken important steps to help small businesses, which have been hardest hit by the crisis, and other employers maintain operations and keep workers employed. Business Roundtable also supports:

- **Additional relief for small businesses.** Congress should supplement SBA's Paycheck Protection Program and consider additional funding options for small business employers.
- **Financing and other relief for minority communities.** Business Roundtable supports efforts to strengthen the financial system serving minority communities and relieve the disproportionate impact of the crisis on minority workers and families.
- **R&D incentives to promote U.S. innovation.** Research and development (R&D) will be key to health breakthroughs and a robust economic recovery. Business Roundtable supports R&D incentives, including maintaining the deductibility of R&D expenses.
- **Increased access to business liquidity.** To assist small businesses and other employers facing severe cash flow challenges, Congress should further defer estimated tax payments, provide pension interest rate stabilization and offer additional liquidity through net operating loss rules and accelerated use of business tax credits.
- **Extension and expansion of customs duty payment deferrals.** Congress and the Administration should build on the customs duty payment deferrals authorized in April by expanding the scope of products covered, making more importers eligible and extending the deferral period.

- **Infrastructure modernization.** Increased federal investment in physical infrastructure, which should more than offset recent reductions in state and private-sector investment and include support for both current and future projects, would deliver long-term economic benefits. Business Roundtable also supports expanded digital infrastructure, including broadband access for underserved areas, online education and training, and telemedicine.

Business Roundtable CEOs are committed to maintaining a strong partnership with you to achieve the most effective federal response possible. We remain confident our country can come together to meet the challenges created by this global pandemic.

Sincerely,



Joshua Bolten
President & CEO
Business Roundtable