



January 13, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem S. Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John R. Thune
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

As our nation marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we have a historic opportunity to renew our commitment to its founding ideals. Today, leaders in business, government, and civil society must once again work together to ensure that these principles continue to anchor a strong American future.

The approach of the midterm elections reminds us that time is short and that Congress must act quickly or risk delaying needed public policy reforms. The anniversary of the Nation's founding highlights our common heritage and commitment to democracy, echoing the Founders' courage in adopting the Declaration and their wisdom in setting up a form of government that has endured for a quarter of a millennium. This stirring call to the high responsibilities of public office echoes today and should impel us towards bipartisan progress on issues of great national importance.

The public policy center of The Conference Board, the Committee for Economic Development (CED), will continue as a partner, advisor, and source of information for Congress and the Administration in advancing needed reforms and sound policy. In 2026, our Trustees, who collectively represent more than 30 industries, 4 million employees, and more than \$2 trillion in revenues, will focus on three important policy initiatives that are foundational to our future:

Restore Fiscal Responsibility

The United States' long-term prosperity and security depends on strengthening fiscal discipline. Balancing the budget, reducing the growth in the national debt, and addressing vulnerabilities are essential steps. Fiscal responsibility includes the importance not only of cutting spending and reforming tax policy, but also of promoting economic growth. Achieving sustainable growth requires raising revenues, promoting reindustrialization, and investing in the middle class to tame inflation and strengthen economic resilience.

To this end, building on our longstanding recommendation for a bipartisan fiscal commission on the debt and deficits, we will propose recommendations on how such a commission can inform the public of our current unsustainable fiscal path's dangers, advance the debate on solutions, and assist Congress in developing its own plan to address the issue of fiscal responsibility which threatens our national prosperity. Most immediately, unsustainable debt and deficits pose imminent threats to social programs on which millions of Americans depend; more subtly, they risk American leadership of the global economy and the ability of businesses to find capital to grow and provide jobs.

A fiscal commission is only one part of a comprehensive agenda on fiscal responsibility, which includes the future of entitlement programs, the Federal budget, and the budget process. Further, proactive and sustainable economic growth policies are central to a long-term solution.

Strengthen Trust in Democracy and Free Enterprise

Public confidence in capitalism is eroding, especially among younger generations, and an increasing number of Americans are worried about the foundations of democracy. The image of free enterprise has become distorted in recent years, leading to this result — a trend which must be reversed. CED believes that the business community has an important role to play in demonstrating that an economy based on free enterprise can, and should, work for everyone.

As business leaders, we plan to advocate for the benefits of free enterprise in promoting opportunity, innovation, and prosperity. Equally, the strength of democracy and the rule of law is essential to capitalism, and the business community has a strong role to play in addressing current challenges, including cronyism and the dangers of state capitalism, in a nonpartisan way. Increasing polarization and disinformation affect business as much as politics. CED will continue its longstanding work in strengthening civic participation through advocating for free and fair voting and ending gerrymandering. Encouraging bipartisan collaboration to address our challenges is critical. Mutual respect, civility in public life, and collaboration remain essential to shared prosperity, a well-functioning capitalist system, and to democracy.

Within this broad framework, strengthening civility in public debate is particularly important. How do we engage with each other and promote a spirit of collaborative debate? How do we recover the ability to disagree with civility and grace? How do we not personalize disagreements, either individually or by political party affiliation? These are questions with which business leaders are deeply concerned and which we wish to help find answers to for the good of the country as a whole.

Build the Workforce of Tomorrow upon Education and Technology

A strong, prosperous, free economy depends on a workforce that is prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. This requires a strong education system at all levels. CED believes that direct linkages between education and business leaders are essential to help ensure that our education system, including our system of innovation, based on partnerships involving government, educational institutions, and business, is the best in the world.

Within this broad theme, several sub-themes will be important in our work. First is the role of artificial intelligence (AI), with both opportunities and challenges for workers as well as prospects for guardrails on AI (such as CED has proposed) that remain a guide for Federal AI legislation. In addition, businesses must focus not only on upskilling but also reskilling by aligning existing skills with jobs less susceptible to automation.

Equally, business has a strong interest in ensuring that students are prepared and can drive long-term US competitiveness and foster the creativity and problem-solving skills needed to succeed. One particular concern in this area is the importance of the healthcare workforce at a time of growing demand for healthcare as essential to the growth of this large and dynamic economic sector and to the imperative of preventive, value-based care. A further concern of business is how changes in immigration policy may affect the US workforce and, thus, the economy.

We must take stock of where we stand as a country — and to recommit to our Nation's founding principles with vigor, principles that the Committee for Economic Development has itself sought to further since our founding in 1942. We stand ready to work with you in this effort as the signers of the Declaration mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the success of the American experiment.

Respectfully,

David K. Young
President, Committee for Economic Development
The public policy center of The Conference Board