

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEIL L. BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &
CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

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July 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

As the Committee prepares to mark up the Fiscal Year 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges you to fully fund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, the Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis, and federal agencies that assist in trade negotiations. The Chamber remains concerned that the ongoing threat of cyberattacks must be met with increased vigilance and enforcement and supports increasing resources to combat those crimes.

Specifically, the Chamber supports full funding included in this legislation for the following agencies, offices, and programs.

- **The Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Program:** The MEP program helps manufacturers become more competitive by improving their productivity, leveraging private sector investments, and assisting the U.S. industrial base in maintaining its status as an innovative high-tech global competitor. The Chamber urges greater investment in the program by providing at least \$153 million for qualified MEP centers.
- **Census Bureau:** This legislation includes \$1.68 billion for the Census Bureau to ensure that 2020 decennial census operations and American Community Survey (ACS) programs can move forward. As the 2020 decennial census winds down, an inconsistent stream of funding could have catastrophic effects for completing the census and ultimately result in a more costly and inaccurate count. Unreliable census data would have harmful effects on businesses and the American economy. Businesses planning on expanding and growing would be faced with making decisions on where to invest based on poor data.
- **Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA):** Increased funding of at least \$112 million as provided in this bill would enable the BEA to continue its critical work to improve the

quality and depth of important economic data, improve the accuracy of GDP estimates, speed up the release of regional statistics, and provide business investment data on an annual basis.

- **Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR):** The Chamber supports at least \$55 million for USTR. This office is charged with negotiating new trade agreements to open international markets to exports of U.S. goods and services, protect U.S. investments abroad, and ensure effective enforcement of U.S. trade agreements. Exports have been a major source of economic growth and job creation over the past 25 years, and a fully-funded USTR that is empowered to secure additional market-opening trade agreements will benefit U.S. workers, farmers, and businesses.
- **International Trade Administration (ITA):** The Chamber supports including \$542 million for the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, which also provides essential technical and regional expertise relating to trade negotiations and enforcement.

The Department of Justice and the FBI are on the front lines in the fight to combat cybercrime, terrorism, and espionage. The Chamber supports increasing the resources that law enforcement agencies can marshal to counter cyber threats internationally. Malicious cyberattacks cost our economy approximately \$109 billion a year. Cyber challenges, such as protecting critical infrastructure and addressing liability concerns, require a coordinated effort by business and government. The Chamber is helping lead that partnership. We also continue to help businesses of all sizes understand, anticipate, and mitigate cyberattacks.

The Chamber supports increasing funding for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to \$1.04 billion, which is the FY 2020 enacted amount for the agency. The Chamber is concerned by any potential reduction in NIST funding for the industry-government efforts on cybersecurity and other emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), including the *Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity*, Internet of Things (IoT) security, Face Recognition Vendor Test (FRVT), and the *U.S. Leadership in AI: A Plan for Federal Engagement in Developing Technical Standards and Related Tools*. The Department of Commerce, especially NIST, has done an admirable job convening many organizations to work on key cyber and emerging technology issues. The Chamber appreciates that NIST has been actively meeting with foreign parties (e.g., the European Union) to press them to embrace an IoT security capabilities baseline.

Standards and best practices relevant to cybersecurity and emerging technologies are typically led by the private sector and adopted on a voluntary basis; they are optimal when developed and recognized globally. Such approaches avoid burdening IoT cyber and emerging technology stakeholders with requirements coming from multiple, and often conflicting, jurisdictions. The Chamber urges the administration to work with international partners and believes that these discussions should be multi stakeholder driven and occur routinely. We also want to ensure that NIST facilities are at the caliber appropriate to continue world-class research and partner with industry. In addition, the Chamber recommends that Congress encourage the

administration and NIST to develop an AI risk management framework in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to advance U.S. leadership in trustworthy AI.

And finally, the Chamber supports prohibiting the Department of Justice from entering into civil settlements that require donations to organizations that are not parties to the litigation. This practice raises serious separation of powers concerns and undermines Congress's exclusive appropriations authority. Congress alone has the power of the purse, and agencies should not be allowed to circumvent the appropriations process to fund special interest groups.

By supporting American manufacturers, we can ensure that businesses can continue to bring innovation to market and grow to hire more workers. We believe that a commitment in funding the statistical agencies will yield a better measure of our changing economy and the challenges that lay ahead. The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these recommendations as you prepare to mark up the Fiscal Year 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neil L. Bradley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil L. Bradley

cc: Members of the House Committee on Appropriations