

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000  
202/463-5310

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, commends the House Judiciary Committee's bipartisan criminal justice reform initiative.

The Chamber is pleased that the Committee is taking up important criminal justice reform bills this week, including H.R. 4002, the "Criminal Code Improvement Act of 2015," H.R. 4003, the "Regulatory Reporting Act of 2015," H.R. 4001, the "Fix the Footnotes Act of 2015," H.R. 3713, the "Sentencing Reform Act of 2015," and the "Clean Up the Code Act of 2015." Criminal justice reform is a laudable, bipartisan goal that, if achieved, will rein in over-criminalization and ensure that criminal punishments are appropriately tailored.

The Chamber strongly supports the Criminal Code Improvement Act of 2015. It would, in addition to streamlining a complex portion of the criminal code, establish a default *mens rea* requirement applicable to any criminal statute that fails to include a state of mind requirement. State of mind requirements ensure that only those who are morally culpable are subject to criminal punishment. This common-sense reform would protect Americans from strict liability prosecution under poorly drafted statutes. Accordingly, the Chamber urges you to vote in favor of the Criminal Code Improvement Act of 2015 and to oppose any amendments that would weaken or strike its essential *mens rea* provisions.

The Chamber also strongly supports the Regulatory Reporting Act of 2015, which would require each federal agency to identify the rules and regulations it has promulgated that may be criminally enforced. Although reliable estimates suggest that more than 300,000 regulations

have criminal impact, the true extent of regulatory criminalization is currently unknown. The Chamber urges you to vote in favor of the Regulatory Reporting Act of 2015.

The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these and other criminal justice reform measures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Committee on the Judiciary