

KEY VOTE ALERT!

December 17, 2015

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016,” which is expected to be offered as an amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2029, and which would provide funding for the federal government for the remainder of the 2016 fiscal year, and would enact several significant policy reforms.

In particular, the Chamber strongly supports several provisions of the House amendment related to:

- **Crude Oil Exports** – The United States is the only producing country that bans oil exports, much to the nation’s geopolitical and economic detriment and in violation of the nation’s obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The administration is already in the process of lifting sanctions that have prevented Iran from freely exporting oil even while the same opportunity is not afforded U.S. producers. Lifting this archaic ban would help deleverage countries like Russia that use oil exports as a tool to achieve political goals bringing harm to U.S. allies, while also supporting 400,000 jobs and lowering gasoline prices in the United States.
- **Cybersecurity** – As provided in Division N of the House amendment, the “Cybersecurity Act of 2015” would establish a voluntary information sharing program, strengthening businesses’ protection and resilience against cyberattacks. This legislation’s narrow safeguards – including limited liability, regulatory, disclosure, and antitrust protections – should constructively influence businesses’ decisions to share cyber threat data and defensive measures more quickly and frequently. At the same time, this legislation includes safeguards which address the concerns of privacy and civil liberties organizations.
- **Country of Origin Labeling** – The House amendment would avert imminent trade retaliation against the United States in the dispute over the U.S. Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) rule for meat. On December 7, the WTO authorized Canada and Mexico to apply retaliatory tariffs against \$1 billion worth of U.S. exports, threatening thousands of American jobs. With retaliation expected within a matter of days, the Chamber applauds Congress



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for including in this omnibus bill provisions to repeal the COOL rule for meat, which is the only way to avoid the substantial damage that retaliation would inflict on American workers, farmers, ranchers, and companies.

- **Obamacare taxes** – The legislation would delay for two years the 40 percent excise tax on health benefits that is undermining employer-sponsored insurance, which more than 160 million Americans depend upon to meet their health insurance needs, and delay for one year the health insurance tax that hits America’s small businesses particularly hard in the form of higher health insurance costs. The Chamber looks forward to working with Congress in the future to ensure both of these delays are made permanent.
- **Free Speech** – The legislation would help preserve the free speech rights of the business community and others by prohibiting government agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and Internal Revenue Service from inappropriately limiting the ability to engage in political and public policy related speech.

This legislation is not perfect; no legislation ever is. The Chamber is disappointed that policy-related provisions included in the House and Senate versions of individual appropriations bills are not included in the final legislation. However, on balance, the Chamber applauds negotiators from the House and Senate for reaching agreement on this final package, and urges Congress to approve it as expeditiously as practicable.

The Chamber supports the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016,” and will include votes on, or in relation to, this legislation—including votes on the Rule—in our annual *How They Voted* scorecard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

R. Bruce Josten