

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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October 18, 2011

TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

As the United States Senate begins consideration of H.R. 2112, the “Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012,” the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world’s largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, urges you to consider the following recommendations.

The Chamber urges you to provide at least \$146 million for qualified Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers. The MEP program helps manufacturers become more competitive by improving their productivity, leveraging private sector investments, and assisting the U.S. industrial base to become an innovative high tech global competitor.

The Chamber strongly urges you to fully fund the Census Bureau, and the American Community Survey (ACS) for FY 2012. ACS data points are critical for business decision-making and long range planning. The business community uses census information daily to drive sound investment decisions affecting the allocation of resources throughout the country. The Chamber and business community remain concerned that cutting the Census Bureau’s budget at this time could have a damaging effect for quality data collection and force the Bureau to cancel the 2012 Economic Census. The Economic Census provides important statistics and is critical to the competitiveness of U.S. business and industry.

In addition to meeting the Census Bureau’s funding needs for the ACS, the Chamber strongly urges you to support full funding for the Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Fully funded, the BEA would continue its critical work to improve the quality and depth of important economic data, and allow the BEA to improve the accuracy of GDP estimates, speed up the release of regional statistics, and provide business investment data on an annual basis.

The Chamber strongly supported enactment of the PRO-IP Act (P.L. 110-403), which strengthened federal intellectual property (IP) laws and authorized necessary resources for federal, state, and local law enforcement to combat IP crimes. For FY 2012, the Chamber urges the continued funding of dedicated IP Federal Bureau of Investigations and federal prosecutors that were funded in FY 2010 and FY 2011, and urges the continued funding of competitive grants to state and locals to combat IP theft and counterfeiting.

On behalf of the companies and workers that we represent, we respectfully request that you commit at least \$55 million to the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) for FY 2012. Given the rapidly rising workload relating to enforcement actions, the urgent need to swiftly implement the recently approved trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, and the need to negotiate additional market-opening trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, USTR will need additional resources. In recent years, even the translation budget relating to trade enforcement has been woefully inadequate, and these kinds of basic needs are only mounting. In addition, strong trade policy and enforcement would be necessary to achieve the goal of doubling exports, and USTR would need additional resources to get the job done.

In addition, the Chamber supports language that would retain current restrictions on the Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) ability to engage in class action lawsuits.

Maintaining, modernizing and expanding America's transportation system is important to U.S. productivity and economic competitiveness in the long run, while investment in transportation infrastructure supports jobs in the near term. The Chamber encourages the Senate to maintain overall highway, transit and aviation program levels at current service levels.

Recognizing that Congress is currently working to conclude the conference on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF) reauthorization, the Chamber urges the Senate to enable full funding of authorized amounts once the legislation is finalized, including providing essential general fund resources.

Similarly, reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is expected to be considered by Congress. The Chamber urges that highway, transit and safety programs be funded at current service levels. There are adequate resources in the Highway Trust Fund for maintaining current services in FY 2012.

The Chamber urges the rejection of any amendment that would prevent or impede implementation of the Pilot Program on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Long-Haul Trucking Provisions, including amendments that would deny. Removing the funding would halt the pilot program's progress, leading to the immediate re-imposition of retaliatory Mexican tariffs on U.S. goods and likely U.S. jobs lost. According to a U.S. Chamber study, those tariffs, which are in the process of being removed, impacted more than \$2 billion in U.S. exports and endangered more than 25,000 American jobs. It is imperative to defeat any amendment halting the Pilot Program to preserve U.S. jobs.

In these difficult budgetary times, and with uncertainty surrounding the resolution of major infrastructure authorization bills, it is critical that this appropriations bill reflect existing statutory program structures. No Highway Trust Fund (HTF) or AATF resources, or surface transportation and aviation budget authority should be diverted from infrastructure needs.

Additionally, the Chamber applauds the inclusion of provisions in the bill prohibiting the U.S. Department of Transportation from using any resources to implement changes to the Block

Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program. The BARR program allows business aircraft operators with privacy or security concerns for their operations to request that Aircraft Situation Display to Industry (ASDI) data provided to the Federal Aviation Administration be blocked from public dissemination. The Chamber is opposed to FAA's changes that dramatically limit the program. FAA's restrictions are an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a threat to the competitiveness of U.S. companies, and a potential risk to persons traveling on a general aviation aircraft.

The Chamber strongly opposes the addition of provisions to this appropriations bill that would dismantle the temporary agreement between the United States and Brazil regarding their World Trade Organization (WTO) cotton case. This temporary agreement was reached last year to avert trade retaliation by Brazil against the United States resulting from U.S. non-compliance with its WTO cotton-related obligations. Among the commitments, the United States agreed to the provision of temporary technical assistance and capacity building funds to Brazil until a definitive solution to the dispute could be reached in the context of the upcoming Farm Bill. If this agreement is undone, Brazil could immediately impose approximately \$1 billion in WTO-sanctioned trade retaliation against U.S. exports and intellectual property rights. These sanctions would likely include tariffs against U.S. goods as high as 100% as well as the suspension of protection for U.S. copyrights and patents as authorized by the WTO. These actions could cause the loss of tens of thousands of American jobs and establish a dangerous precedent for future actions in the WTO.

The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these recommendations.

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" clearly visible.

R. Bruce Josten