February 17, 2017

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

As business leaders in Los Angeles and Southern California, we are fortunate to live and work in a global city that exemplifies the world’s diversity and offers economic opportunities for millions of people. Individuals from all over the United States and the world come to L.A. every day to start a business or work in our region. I would like to share some information about those individuals and their participation in the Los Angeles economy in this letter.

Los Angeles County is one of the world’s economic leaders. If we were a stand-alone country, we would have the 19th largest economy in the world. We are a main point of entry for global markets, a hub for technology and innovation, and the center of the entertainment industry. We are home to more than 10 million people, 3.5 million of whom are immigrants. World-class colleges and universities have made L.A. a gateway for talented domestic and foreign students who have helped position our region and state as national leaders in job creation and economic growth.

According to a recent report by New American Economy, *New Americans in Los Angeles*, “In 2014, foreign-born residents contributed $232.9 billion to L.A. County’s GDP and held $70.7 billion in spending power. Six of the thirteen Fortune 500 companies in L.A. County were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Immigrants comprise 51.5 percent of entrepreneurs and 43.2 percent of the employed labor force in L.A. County.”

Recognizing this impact, the L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce is a champion for immigration issues that benefit our economy. We need the expansion of H1-B visas to grow our innovation and technology sectors. We need farm workers to plant and harvest the agricultural products that help California feed America and the world. We support the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy because we know that these young people will contribute to our state and nation if we continue to invest in their future.

As indicated in the data above, the Los Angeles economy has benefited greatly from immigrant entrepreneurs and workers. We encourage you to take economies like Los Angeles and California into consideration as you, your administration and congressional leaders develop federal policies to modernize our nation’s immigration system. Putting up barriers to economic participation and contribution based on immigration status would have a negative impact on the Los Angeles economy; importantly, it would also reduce our region’s positive impact on the U.S. economy as a whole.
Thank you in advance for your consideration of this data about the Los Angeles economy as you make short and long-term decisions for the United States, California and Los Angeles. The business community is eager to work with you to create jobs throughout America and to rebuild our nation’s infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Gary Toebben
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate Majority Leader
    The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives