



RECAP: SOLUTIONS 2020 BRIEFING WITH TOM STEYER

MARCH 2019



On March 21, 2019, Business Forward members briefed noted investor, philanthropist, and activist, Tom Steyer. This is our fourth briefing in the *Solutions 2020* series.

Tom Steyer focused on the necessity of the rule of law; how America should deal with international trade; and the need for green energy innovation. Business leaders shared their comments, suggestions, and questions with Mr. Steyer, discussing topics which varied from farming to technological innovation.

Rule of Law

Steyer emphasized the importance of maintaining the legitimacy of the legal system under the current administration. He provided examples of other nations who both experience high growth rates and respect the legal system.

"[President Trump] is a guy who's corrupt. And that corruption is a contradiction to our system of government and to our way of life ... his actions and his behavior specifically, directly, and powerfully weakens the rule of law. And that presents very serious long-term economic risks. The places around the world that boast long term consistent growth and prosperity ... Canada, Sweden, Singapore, Chile, Japan, Germany. That's five continents. That is all different ethnicities and racial backgrounds. What is the consistency between those countries? They respect the rule of law and they invest in their citizens."

International Trade and Tariffs

Steyer outlined how his experience as an entrepreneur, business owner and finance expert has influenced his views on current international trade deals.

"International trade is something that lifts us all up. What we also should all realize as well is there are countries that cheat in international trade mostly about, in my opinion, internet intellectual property. Taking advantage or not opening up markets there is cheating, and we should be firmly and actively resistant to it. I think what we need to do is be aware that there are people who cheat, and be absolutely forceful in going after that cheating and trying

to prevent it at all costs, because it does exist and it is important and we need to stand up for Americans.”

Green Energy

Business leaders submitted multiple questions on the environment and clean energy policy. Sylvia Leahu-Aluas Indianapolis, Indiana asked Steyer for examples of renewable energy and clean mobility projects he was investing in. David Winkler from Broomfield, Colorado asked about the most exciting possibilities for economic development that are connected to addressing climate change. And Rayna Handelman from Dallas, Texas asked for Steyer’s perspective on the government’s role in developing and integrating new technologies in renewable energy.

Steyer highlighted the importance of utilizing available technology in all sectors of the economy.

“The technology is here for us to have cleaner air so that people aren’t sick. We can have cleaner water, so people aren’t sick. We can have more jobs, and higher paying jobs, if we do this. We can lead the world and we can build gigantic industries. People used to talk about what it costs us to do this. Not doing this is going to cost us immensely economically, but also from a health standpoint and from a disaster standpoint. So, when I look at an economic development around climate, I realize we are going to have to [use sustainable technology] across the board.”

With the help of more than 60 of America’s most respected companies, Business Forward is making it easier for more than 100,000 business leaders from across America to advise Washington on how to create jobs and accelerate our economy. More than 650 mayors, governors, members of Congress, and senior Administration officials have participated in our briefings.

Business leaders who have participated in our briefings have seen their suggestions implemented in the Affordable Care Act, the JOBS Act, the Clean Power Plan, the Toxic Substances Control Act, three trade agreements, and the President’s budgets. Many have also shared their recommendations with their representatives in Congress and through phone calls, op-eds, and interviews with local media. Ninety-eight out of 100 business leaders who have participated in a Business Forward briefing would be interested in participating in another one.

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