

PROGRESS REPORT : Q3 2019

# SOLUTIONS > 2020

REAL-WORLD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE  
NEW CONGRESS AND THE NEXT PRESIDENT

▶ BUSINESS FORWARD

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Forward works with more than 100,000 business leaders across the country – and more than 650 mayors, governors, members of Congress, and senior administration officials have participated in our briefings, including Presidents Clinton and Obama, and Vice President Biden.

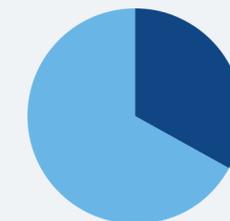
Local business leaders in the Business Forward network tend to be from small and medium-sized companies representing a range of industries. They are a civic-minded and results-oriented group. Six in 10 are women. One in four live in rural areas.

## SOLUTIONS > 2020

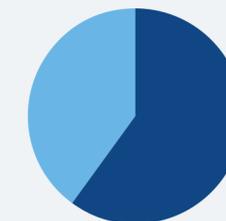
*Solutions 2020* is a Business Forward initiative pairing leading policy experts with local business leaders from around the country to outline challenges facing our country and develop real-world policy solutions to share with the 2020 presidential candidates. Seven presidential candidates--Senators Harris, Booker, and Klobuchar; Mayor Buttigieg; Congressmen Delaney and Moulton; and investor and philanthropist Tom Steyer -- have already participated in briefings.

As part of the *Solutions 2020* programming, we are building working groups on a range of policy areas. These groups are producing issue briefs for the presidential campaigns and other local business leaders. [Click to join the \*Solutions 2020\* program here.](#)

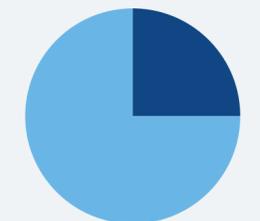
### THE BUSINESS FORWARD NETWORK



1 IN 3  
ARE C-SUITE  
OR BUSINESS  
OWNERS



6 IN 10  
ARE  
WOMEN



1 IN 4  
LIVE IN  
RURAL AREAS

# CANDIDATE CALLS

Most candidates use their briefings to outline their economic policy agendas. Highlights include Senator Klobuchar detailing her \$1 trillion infrastructure package, Congressman Delaney underscoring the importance of technological innovation, Representative Moulton discussing V.A. health care, and Senator Booker focusing on the future of work and his accomplishments as mayor of Newark, New Jersey.



**KAMALA HARRIS**  
*U.S. Senator (D-CA)*



**PETE BUTTIGIEG**  
*Mayor of South Bend, IN*



**AMY KLOBUCHAR**  
*U.S. Senator (D-MN)*



**CORY BOOKER**  
*U.S. Senator (D-NJ)*



**JOHN DELANEY**  
*Former U.S. Representative (D-MD)*



**SETH MOULTON**  
*U.S. Representative (D-MA)*



**TOM STEYER**  
*American Philanthropist*

# THE ISSUES

To date, our business leaders have asked hundreds of questions. Together, these questions provide a survey of sorts. What do civic minded business leaders care about most? And how are the candidates responding to their concerns? We ranked the questions by topic.

## #1 PROBLEM SOLVING

One out of eight questions included some kind of reference to how the candidate could move her or his plan through Congress. At a time when many voters are debating the importance of “electability,” these questions should provide comfort. Our business leaders don’t really care about “message.” They weren’t asking how each candidate plans to get elected. Instead, they were asking about how the candidate plans to govern. Klobuchar and Booker offered several examples of bipartisan accomplishments on their records. Our leaders were also more likely to ask candidates how they will pay for the programs they propose. Klobuchar was particularly strong in this area, offering “pay-fors” for each element of her infrastructure plan.

## #2 BUDGET, TAXES, FISCAL POLICY

Questions about the budget, tax reform, and fiscal policy were most common – no surprise coming from a group of business leaders. Our network worries about the deficit, but they are more concerned with the lack of long-term planning in Washington. Big solutions – like fixing our infrastructure, creating more competition in health care markets, and shifting to clean energy – require 10-year plans, and Washington has been operating under six-month budgets for years. They believe chaos in the White House is making these problems worse. There’s a cost to government by Tweet, and our business leaders are paying it.

## #3 CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Climate change came next, with questions spread evenly between the cost of severe weather and the potential of clean energy. Our network tends to focus on the fact that China is investing three times more each year in clean energy capacity and R&D than we are. If President Trump gives China this kind of head start, our business leaders reason, we’ll have a hard time catching up. (Senator Harris made this point, as well.) Our network also supports the state and local officials driving the “we’re still in” campaign for the Paris Climate Treaty, which now includes most of America’s biggest cities. Booker highlighted steps he took as mayor of Newark to invest in retrofitting buildings. Klobuchar called the federal government the “loser” on climate and clean energy since it has been left on the sidelines.

# THE ISSUES

## #4 SMALL BUSINESS POLICY

Small business issues ranked fourth, with most questions concerning access to capital. Delaney, who founded two highly successful companies before joining Congress, presented a number of ideas our next President should consider. Harris emphasized the importance of working with small business leaders to look for opportunities to make regulations smarter. Booker talked about his work with small businesses during his years as mayor of Newark. (It's clear his years as mayor shape his approach to governing more than his years in the Senate.) Moulton pointed to his experience serving on the House Small Business Committee.

## #5 HEALTH CARE

Health care, which tends to rank first in our annual surveys of business leader concerns, ranked fifth in our *Solutions 2020* programming. The bulk of those questions related to drug prices or ways to balance Medicare “extra” with today’s current system. The far left and far right tend to talk about Medicare for All as an all or nothing proposition. Each of the candidates who addressed health care in our briefings adopted a more pragmatic approach. Buttigieg advocated for a national challenge in the form of a Medicare option, which would push the private sector to deliver a more efficient health care system. Klobuchar outlined her plans for a public option and lower drug pricing. Moulton stands apart on health care in one compelling way: An Iraq War veteran, he’s refused the generous coverage provided to Members of Congress and continues to get his health care through the Veterans Administration.

## #6 INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure ranked sixth, and the range of discussion in this area presents an interesting view into the candidates. Delaney talked about infrastructure in terms of international competition, noting that America is investing half what it traditionally has (as a share of GDP) – and one-fourth as much as China. Harris made strong points on the potential return on investment in America’s clean energy infrastructure. Booker focused on ways to break through the gridlock holding back needed repairs and maintenance in our biggest cities. Buttigieg connected infrastructure with manufacturing jobs and higher wages.

# THE ISSUES

## #7 DIVERSITY

We've come a long way from the example set by President George W. Bush, who, just days after 9/11, called on Americans to look after their Muslim neighbors. On diversity, business leaders have stopped looking to Washington for leadership. As our business leaders see it, Trump fails to realize that diversity, tolerance, and inclusion are good for business. Today, work is the most diverse part of most Americans' day – and CEOs who create inclusive teams outperform those who don't.

## #8 TRADE

Trump presents his tariffs and trade war threats as negotiating tactics that will ultimately win a better deal, but our network looks at the uncertainty these trade wars are creating and thinks twice about new capital investment. Fortune 500 CEOs seem to agree: Business Roundtable's quarterly survey shows CEO confidence falling for the fifth straight quarter – and capital investment is falling with it. On trade, Harris drew the connection between Trump's poor leadership on foreign policy with the growing cost of tariffs and trade wars on American businesses. Buttigieg criticized the administration's trade strategy with China, arguing that Trump's tariffs won't force China to change its economic model but will actually end up harming American workers, farmers, and consumers.

## #9 WOMEN'S HEALTH

The range of questions varied little from candidate to candidate, with one exception: reproductive health care. Abortion and birth control were not raised in our first two briefings (Delaney and Harris), but they were common in our two most recent briefings (Buttigieg and Moulton). Questions about abortion and birth control were divided evenly among men and women, and they tended to focus on the economic pain governors in Georgia, Missouri, and Alabama are about to cause their respective states. Helping eliminate the gender gap could grow our economy by \$1 trillion each year. Instead, we're making it harder for women to plan and support their families. Several business leaders recommended boycotts. With nine states passing abortion bans, we expect reproductive health care to occupy more of our briefings.

# WORKING GROUPS

We are pairing local business leaders with policy experts to present real-world recommendations to presidential candidates and their policy advisors. These working groups meet monthly and will produce issue briefs and policy proposals over the next 18 months.

[Click here to learn more about working groups.](#)

## ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS



INFRASTRUCTURE



FOREIGN POLICY



FUTURE OF WORK



CLIMATE &  
CLEAN ENERGY



SMALL BUSINESS



EDUCATION

## COMING SOON



IMMIGRATION



WORKING FAMILIES



GOVERNMENT  
INNOVATION

# WORKING GROUP BRIEFINGS



## MICHAEL S. BARR

*Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of Public Policy, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy*



## MARIE JOHNS

*CEO, PPC-Leftwich LLC*



## LAURA ROSENBERGER

*Senior Fellow and Director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, The German Marshall Fund of the United States*



## LANAE ERICKSON

*Senior Vice President for the Social Policy and Politics Program, Third Way*



## ERIC LESSER

*State Senator, Massachusetts*



## JAKE SULLIVAN

*Senior Fellow and Master in Public Policy, Carsey School of Public Policy*



## AL FITZPAYNE

*Executive Director of the Future of Work Initiative, The Aspen Institute*



## CARLOS MONJE JR.

*Director of Policy and Philanthropy for the United States and Canada, Twitter*



## NAN WHALEY

*Mayor, Dayton, Ohio*



## CHRISTY GOLDFUSS

*Senior Vice President for Energy and Environment Policy, Center for American Progress*



## JOHN D. PORCARI

*President, U.S. Advisory Services, WSP USA*

# RESOURCES: SOLUTIONS 2020 ISSUE BRIEFS



HIGHER EDUCATION



FOREIGN POLICY



INFRASTRUCTURE

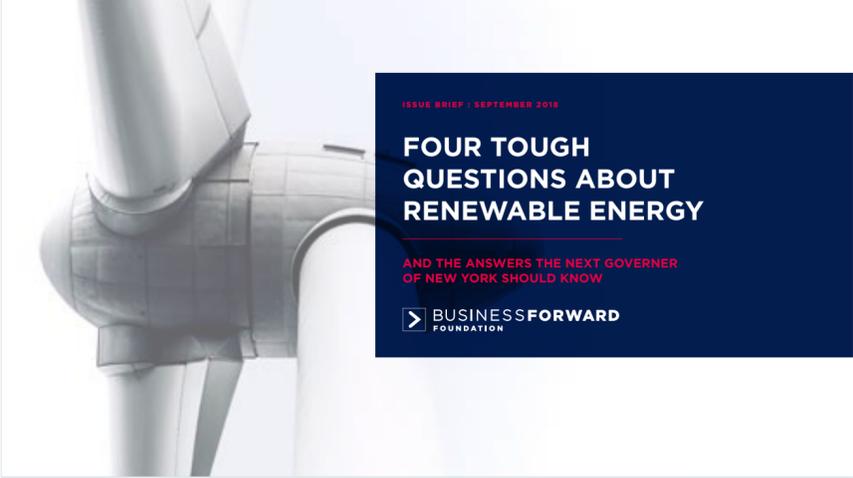


AUTOMATION



PORTABLE BENEFITS

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM BUSINESS FORWARD



ISSUE BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 2019

## FOUR TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY

AND THE ANSWERS THE NEXT GOVERNER OF NEW YORK SHOULD KNOW

BUSINESS FORWARD FOUNDATION

**CLIMATE**



ISSUE BRIEF | Q2 2019

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

BUSINESS FORWARD

**WOMEN'S HEALTH**



ISSUE BRIEF | Q2 2019

## GENDER GAP

BUSINESS FORWARD

**DIVERSITY**



ISSUE BRIEF | 2019 UPDATE

## THE "TRUMP SLUMP" IN HIGHER ED

HOW GROWING INTOLERANCE IS HURTING AMERICA'S COLLEGES, COLLEGE TOWNS, AND STUDENTS

BUSINESS FORWARD FOUNDATION

**HIGHER EDUCATION**



ISSUE BRIEF | NOVEMBER 2018

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

WHAT THE ACA MEANS FOR THE 180 MILLION AMERICANS WITH PRIVATE INSURANCE - AND WHAT REPEAL AND MEDICARE FOR ALL PROPOSALS COULD COST THEM

BUSINESS FORWARD

**HEALTH CARE**



ISSUE BRIEF | OCTOBER 2018

## UNPACKING THE ECONOMIC HARM OF TRUMP'S TARIFFS

HIGHER PRICES, BAD FAITH, LITIGATION, RETALIATION, ESCALATION, AND UNCERTAINTY

BUSINESS FORWARD

**TRADE**

The whiteboard contains the following information:

- 30.2 Million US Small Businesses** (with a house icon)
- 47.5% of US Employees** (with an icon of three people)
- 2/3 of Net New Jobs in Past 25 Years** (with an icon of a person and a document)
- Small Business Loans as a Share of Bank Loans are in Decline** (with a bar chart)

Year	% Bank Loans to Small Businesses
2007	48%
2008	38%
2009	35%
2010	30%

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[BUSINESSFWD.ORG](http://BUSINESSFWD.ORG)

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