BUSINESS LEADER STATEMENT ON THE FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

IN SUPPORT OF VOTING RIGHTS, ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT, ELECTION SECURITY, AND TRANSPARENCY IN POLITICAL SPENDING
INTRODUCTION:

Business Forward Foundation helps local business leaders make the “business case” for climate action, affordable healthcare, immigration reform, diversity and inclusion, sensible tax laws, criminal justice reform, infrastructure investment, and other pro-growth reforms. These leaders brief policymakers, work with local media, publish op-eds, submit testimony, advocate online, and organize their communities. We also promote their recommendations through issue briefs, survey reports, training manuals, and podcasts. More than 650 mayors, governors, members of Congress, and senior Administration officials have participated in our briefings.

We asked business leaders in our network to add their name to a statement in support of the democracy reforms originally outlined in the *For the People Act*, which passed the House in May but subsequently stalled in the Senate. Hundreds of them responded, and their comments are featured in this document.

In September, a group of nine Senators announced a revised, compromise version of the bill, called the *Freedom to Vote Act*. Our statement has since been updated to reflect the new legislation, and local business leaders from across the country have joined. Both statements’ signatories are included in the following list.
We are small business owners, executives, entrepreneurs, and investors from across the United States, and we are writing to urge you to support the Freedom to Vote Act, a set of reforms for protecting and improving American democracy. The bill strengthens voting rights, enhances election security, prevents corruption in government, and increases transparency in political spending.

Rebuilding trust in elections is a critical step toward assuring voters that their votes will count and voices will be heard. Key reforms to democracy would ensure a government that reflects voters’ vision to increase local investment, create good jobs, and foster equitable economies. Local business leaders understand what their communities need to achieve these goals.

Americans want a system that works for every voter. For far too long, barriers to voting have undercut the power and representation of Black, Latinx, AAPI, Native Americans and people with disabilities.

As businesses committed to supporting the communities our employees live and work in, we urge Congress to take immediate action.

790 BUSINESS LEADERS SIGNED THIS STATEMENT:

- Aaeron Robb, Baltimore, MD
- Abdul Wahid Khan, Valley Stream, NY
- Adam Wilczewski, Reston, VA
- Adina Hamilton, Newburgh, NY
- Adrian Mitchell, Detroit, MI
- Agaytha Corbin, Dayton, OH
- Al Boccio, Amityville, NY
- Al Liebeskind, Millsboro, DE
- Al Luque, Philadelphia, PA
- Al Huntley, South Portland, ME
- Alan Baum, West Bloomfield, MI
- Alejandro Melendez, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Alexandra Fay von Ary, Brighton, MA
- Alice Holm, Cloquet, MN
- Alisa Clark, Lithonia, GA
- Alpana Banerjee, Seattle, WA
- Amanda Welch, Dumfries, VA
- Amen Ra, Grand Prairie, TX
- Amira Mansour, Irvine, CA
- Amy Harlib, New York, NY
- Andrea Glenn, Las Vegas, NV
- Andrea Bonnett, Altadena, CA
- Andrew Pearce, Minneapolis, MN
- Andrew Taylor, Phoenix, AZ
- Andrew Mifsud, Bedford, OH
- Andrew Sutton, Kingwood, TX
- Angela Clark, Freeport, IL
- Angelo Madrigale, Brooklyn, NY
- Anita Lock, Oberlin, OH
- Anita Nelam, Columbia, SC
- Anitra House, Bloomington, IN
- Ann Marshall, New York, NY
- Ann Baldwin, Green Valley, AZ
- Anna Horton, Saint Louis, MO
- Anne Marie Principe, Cliffside Park, NJ
- Anthony Miller, Buffalo, NY
- Anthony Paradiso, Montclair, NJ
- Anthony Daniel, Kernersville, NC

“Businesses can’t plan ahead when there is no transparency or accountability.”
- Kathie Norman
  Owner, Kees, Inc.
  Sheboygan, WI

“Trust & faith in our system is essential for ethical business practices.”
- Charles Stathos
  Investor
  Charlottesville, VA
SIGNATORIES

Antonette Raines, Bourbonnais, IL
Arnold Tyler, Charlotte, NC
Art Smoker, Mars Hill, NC
Art Bridge, McMinnville, OR
Ashley Farreny, Pennsauken, NJ
Audrey Mross, Dallas, TX
B.C. Shelby, Portland, OR
Barbara Armstrong-Magwood, Panorama City, CA
Barbara McGee- turner, Chicago, IL
Barbara Nye, Erie, PA
Barry White, Boston, MA
Barry Goodspeed, Jefferson City, TN
Ben Ruwe, Felton, CA
Bernard Markstein, Silver Spring, MD
Bert Barry, Saint Louis, MO
Beth Gelfond, New York, NY
Betty Moore, Red Oak, TX
Betty Anne Sayers, Holdrege, NE
Bill Kramer, New Lenox, IL
Billie Bryant Schultz, McKinney, TX
Billy Cardenas, Denver, CO
Billy Scott, Detroit, MI
Bonnie German, Rochester, MI
Boyd Wolf, Denver, CO
Bradford Clapp, Richardson, TX
Brandon Alonso, Las Vegas, NV
Brian Wolf, San Diego, CA
Brian Colfer, Sterling Heights, MI
Brian Lackey, Atoka, OK
Brian White, Chicago, IL
Bruce Ellinwood, Kaneohe, HI
Bruce Rohwer, Paulina, IA
Bryan Yeh, Walnut Creek, CA
Bryant Gilcrease, Jacksonville, FL
Bryce Hansen, Bellevue, WA
Bulbul Gupta, Palo Alto, CA
Buttons Boggs, Walkerton, VA
C. Allen Mullins, Wilkes Barre, PA
Cam Kroso, Wills Point, TX
Candace LaPorte, Las Vegas, NV
Carl Vililella, Coraopolis, PA
Carla Behrens, Longmont, CO
Carleen Martin, West Des Moines, IA
Carlos Nunez, Reseda, CA
Carol King, North Las Vegas, NV
Carol Hernandez, Racine, WI
Carol Kelley, San Diego, CA
Carol Shore, Cincinnati, OH
Carol Berkeley, Boxford, MA
Carol Clark, Columbus, OH
Carolann Jungers, West Palm Beach, FL
Carole Fernholz, Madison, MN
Carole Mason, Walnut Creek, CA
Carolyn Engel, Mesquite, TX
Cassandra Felt, Saint Petersburg, FL
Catherine Foley, Stony Brook, NY
Cesar Javier Camara, Hallandale, FL
Charlene Eblen, Cedar Falls, IA
Charlene Maddox, McDonough, GA
Charles Spivey, Carrollton, VA
Charles Thathos, Charlottesville, VA
Charles Tyler, Lincoln, CA
Charles Compton, Portola Valley, CA
Chase Davies, Saint Paul, MN
Chidi Anunka, Minneapolis, MN
Chris O’Connell, Skokie, IL
Chrisse da Columbus, Atlanta, GA
Christi Griffin, Saint Louis, MO
Christina Potts, Warren, MI
Christine Payden-Travers, Winston Salem, NC
Christopher Cleary, Broomfield, CO
Christopher Vichiola, Danbury, CT
Christopher Stimson, Akron, OH
Christopher Bautista, New York, NY
Cindy Lang, Thomaston, ME
Claudia Gale, Philadelphia, PA
Claudio Hidalgo, Cedar Rapids, IA
Connie Springer, Cincinnati, OH
Curt Herman, Bronson, MI
Curtis Baker, Ocean City, NJ

"Democracy will keep and attract the best and most talented people."
- Jim Cannon
Partner, System3 Analytics
Deerfield, NH

"The stability of the government is extremely critical to business."
- Ronald Breuer
Cutchogue, NY

"America is losing its way, disenfranchising people whose voices matter as much as any corporate voices do... We just had fair and safe elections during a deadly pandemic. We’re a democracy. Safeguard our ability to remain one."
- Faye Sholiton
Beachwood, OH

"The alternative to voting by mail needs to be time off to vote -- but not everyone has jobs where time off to vote is feasible and in urgent situations, I’ve seen employees foregoing voting. We need to have vote by mail and early voting standardized across states."
- Joanne Ladenso
Valley Village, CA
SIGNATORIES

Curtis Brown, Tuscon, AZ
Curtis Lisle, Altamonte Springs, FL
Cyril Crocker, Washington, DC
D.K. Weamer, Shawnee, KS
Dale Gluck, Berwyn, PA
Dan Mostek, Osage, IA
Dan Towery, West Lafayette, IN
Dana Sanchez, Pine, CO
Dana Aberman, Boca Raton, FL
Dana Chasin, Washington, DC
Dana Coble, Punta Gorda, FL
Daniel Huffman, Memphis, TN
Daniel Sayre, Kennebunk, ME
Danny Wilkerson, Southfield, MI
Dante James, Dayton, OH
Daphne Calvin, Houston, TX
Darcy Skarada, Kelseyville, CA
Darha Brofford, Deland, FL
Darryl Horowitt, Fresno, CA
Darryl Dixon, Southfield, MI
Dave Depew, Camino, CA
David Kunhardt, Corte Madera, CA
David Hanna, Crete, IL
David Ulbarri, Chicago, IL
David Bussabarger, Saint Louis, MO
David Cotton, Memphis, TN
David Jarvis, Wyoming, MI
David Jebousek, Seattle, WA
David Hennig, Denver, CO
David Dickson, Chicago, IL
David Hunter, Lynn, MA
David Balise, Paramus, NJ
David Kersten, Sebring, OH
David Schiesl, Tonasket, WA
David Bagley, Port Orange, FL
Dawn Meyer, Long Beach, CA
Dawn Broadbent, Colorado Springs, CO
Dawn Berry-Nath, Plattsmouth, NE
Dawne Santopietro, Macedon, NY
Debbie Lehalder, Grants Pass, OR
Deborah Voves, Anchorage, AK
Deborah Genovesi, Grafton, MA
Debra Lane, Fort Bragg, CA
Debra Quade, Douglas, MI
Debra Vogler, Palm Desert, CA
Delano Wilson, Shreveport, LA
Delia Cooke, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Dennis Boesiger, Lincoln, NE
Dev Mazumdar, Los Angeles, CA
Diana Moon, Denver, CO
Diane Hilscher, Hugo, MN
Ditra Walsh, New York, NY
DO Ellen MB Boudouin-McKey, Bogalusa, LA
Dogan Ozkan, Fairbanks, AK
Dolores Zieser, Dubuque, IA
Dominic Lyon, Upper Marlboro, MD
Don Wieleklnski, Terre Haute, IN
Don Barth, Ashland, VA
Donald Marette, Chevy Chase, MD
Donna Olsen, Grand Forks, ND
Donna West, Las Vegas, NV
Doris Culver, Somers, IA
Dorothy Melone, Anaheim, CA
Dorrie Vukich, Azusa, CA
Doug Spurlin, Fayetteville, AR
Douglas Kidd, Toledo, OH
Douglas Wilson, Little Deer Isle, ME
Douglas Jackson, Seattle, WA
Dwight Walls, Plainview, TX
Dyann Berndt, Berwyn, IL
Dylan Whisman, Newbury Park, CA
Earle B. Higgins Sr., Southfield, MI
Ed Miller, Sparks, NV
Eddie Virella, Norwich, CT
Edith Ogella, Santa Barbara, CA
Edith Ezeani, Silver Spring, MD
Edward Laursen, Denver, CO
Edward Slack, Glenview, PA
Edward Reichman, West Orange, NJ
Edward Sullivan, San Francisco, CA
Edward S. Garcia Jr., Miami, FL

“Special interests continually attempt to undermine the best interests of the U.S.”
- BRADFORD CLAPP
INVESTOR
RICHARDSON, TX

“A stronger, more responsive democracy makes our economy run smarter and stronger. More opportunity means more clients, more business, more profit.”
- SACHIN CHHEDA
PARTNER
NATION CONSULTING
MILWAUKEE, WI

“Voting needs to be made easier for all people to be able to exercise their right.”
- KRISTIN EMERSON
EVENT PROJECT COORDINATOR,
EMERSON CONSULTING
SAINT PAUL, MN

“Every voter has the right to choose who they want to represent them on issues that they feel are important and best for their community.”
- CHRISSEDA COLUMBUS
CEO/FACILITY DIRECTOR,
CCME TRAINING SERVICE
ATLANTA, GA
The For the People Act will limit the dark money that is flooding politics today, and that is good for all of the people in the U.S.

- ANITRA HOUSE, BLOOMINGTON, IN

I want to be certain that my patients, people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, and their families, have access to free and fair elections. I want to know that their voices and views count with elected representatives who put each individual voter first, without undue, hidden influence from corporations or lobbyists.

- DR. KAREN WILLS MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Election accessibility, security and transparency benefit all Americans.

- ROBERT HAKES JR. KINGSLAND, GA

SME businesses feel that the buying of access puts them at a disadvantage. Corruption or perception of it prevents merit entrepreneurs from participating in the economy.

- JESSICA WASSERMAN PARTNER, WASSERMANROWE WASHINGTON, DC
Increased transparency around political donations provides a more level playing field for businesses and more accountability all around.

- JUAN HINDO
PROGRAM MANAGER, IBM
CHICAGO, IL

We need to do everything we can to involve everyone and ensure people meet their potential. To do otherwise wastes human capital, a critical resource for economic growth...

- DAVID DICKSON
PARTNER, CROSSROADS RMC
CHICAGO, IL

A thriving economy depends on an orderly, functioning democracy.

- JON BRUSS
HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Stronger voting rights are essential to my small business. It strengthens my voice as a small business owner and voter who cannot afford to make big political contributions in order to be heard.

- CARL VILLELLA
PRESIDENT, ACCEPTANCE LEASING AND FINANCING SERVICE, INC.
CORRAGON, PA
Voting rights ensure representation of all community members, and in this community there are many in poverty and people of color who must be represented. Laws and policies should not go to the highest bidder.

- SUSAN SHELQUIST
BEMIDJI, MN

It is important that a majority vote represents a majority of the people.

- ELEANOR BIDERMAN
PLATTSMOUTH, NE

I am the founder and CEO of a company that exports to over two dozen countries around the world. The last few years have hurt our stature as a U.S. company, and the emerging voter suppression is a potential death blow...

- SKI MILBURN
EXECUTIVE, VAIREX AIR SYSTEMS
BOULDER, CO

Currently the largest corporations are given a large and overwhelming voice and benefit, prioritizing their growth and profit over all public good. For democracy to survive, this needs to be changed.

- MARIE VENNER
CO-CHAIR, BUSINESSES FOR A LIVABLE CLIMATE
LITTLETON, CO
I work for a nonprofit that serves low-income working families. They do not always have the ability to get to the polls because of work hours, transportation or lack of child care.

- KERRIE MCKEOUGH
GLENVIEW, IL

Political favors should not be sold to the highest bidder. Right now in America every political policy is supported by rich people and corporations. The average American has very little influence over what happens within our country.

- JUDITH RITENBURGH
OWNER/ MANAGER,
GROUP FOSTER HOME
TRAPPER CREEK, AK

Our local economy is dependent on shift workers & service industry workers... Since it is often difficult for these important workers to vote within the confines of Election Day hours, the expansion of early & mail in voting has improved voter turnout for Independents, Democrats and Republicans equally... this law will ensure the most comprehensive approach to ensure that opportunity is afforded to every eligible voter.

- TRACY CONARD
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ROUSS THEATRE AND CENTER FOR THE ARTS
EDINBURG, VA
SIGNATORIES

Michelle Winkel, Pompano Beach, FL
Michelle Dean, Lynnwood, WA
Michelle Alden, Dallas, TX
Mike Coble, Punta Gorda, FL
Mimi Pierre Johnson, Elmont, NY
Miriam Baum, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Monica Stuhleyer, Monroe, MI
Nancy Hoffman, Sparks, NV
Nancy Hill, Phoenix, AZ
Nancy Casey, Soldotna, AK
Nancy Czar, Henderson, NV
Naomi Buckwalter, El Cajon, CA
Nasiru T., Pilot Grove, IA
Nathan Horton, Louisville, KY
Nedra Eldridge, Phoenix, AZ
Nevena Trajkov, Miami, FL
Nicholas Arjooon, Melbourne, FL
Nick Cox, Emerson, GA
Nicolina Contardo, Trenton, NJ
Nondas Moreno, Columbus, OH
Norma Nish, Lansdale, PA
Norman Strickland, Brunswick, GA
Olivia vonNieda, Ephrata, PA
Omar Rodriguez, Hollywood, FL
Osdir Pereira, Hyannis, MA
P. R., Sequim, WA
Pamela Coker, Pueblo, CO
Pamela Holt, San Diego, CA
Pamela Roach, Jersey City, NJ
Pamela Martin, Fenton, MI
Paresh Perry Patel, Hockessin, DE
Pasquale Cirillo, Moodus, CT
Pat Rossman, Elk River, MN
Pat Clark, Pittsburgh, PA
Patricia Depew, Pasadena, CA
Patricia DeLuca, Nokomis, FL
Patricia Jenkins, Ocoee, FL
Patricia Pardun, Marine on Saint Croix, MN
Patricia Etter, Vista, CA
Patricia Mack, Ocala, FL
Patricia Guthrie, Chalfont, PA
Patricia Dicoste, Bellaire, TX
Patricia Willis, Allen, TX
Patricia Simmons, Bozeman, MT
Patrick Herndon, Helotes, TX
Patrick Yam, Redwood City, CA
Patti Miller, Berkeley Springs, WV
Paul Sotkiewicz, Gainesville, FL
Paul Hurd, Nashville, TN
Paul Schmidt, Dallas, TX
Paul Sawyer, Dallas, TX
Paulette Johnson, North Wales, PA
Paulette Jarvey, Canby, OR
Pearl Holloway, Warwick, RI
Peng Cheng, Woodcliff Lake, NJ
Penny Rodriguez, Decatur, GA
Pete Sandifer, Montgomery, AL
Peter Monie, San Antonio, TX
Peter Brady, Pasadena, CA
Peter Smith-Larsen, Provo, UT
Peter Redes, Amherst, NH
Peter Kahigian, Haverhill, MA
Philip Davis, Zebulon, NC
Philip J Hyun, Helmetta, NJ
Phyllis OBrien, Irvington, VA
Phyllis Burright, Dallas, TX
Prima Nwachukwu, Bellaire, TX
Priscilla Ejimofor, Jacksonville, FL
R.P. Wacks, Minneapolis, MN
R.S. Ryan, Edgerton, WI
Raed Sbeite, Irving, TX
Rage Ali, Saint Paul, MN
Raj Subramanian, San Mateo, CA
Ralph Ibarra, Algona, WA
Rama K Paruchuri, Ann Arbor, MI
Ramesh Sheth, Batavia, IL
Randolph Willoby, Webster, TX
Randy Forinash, Ida Grove, IA
Ray Diaz, Orange Park, FL
Raymond Berrios, Riverhead, NY
Rebecca Smith, Kansas City, MO

“...serve economically disadvantaged populations whose voices are critical to a properly functioning democracy... Without their participation, their needs will go unmet and misunderstood and ultimately require greater expenditures by the state on social services.”

- Ritu Chattree
CEO, COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
NEW YORK, NY

“I believe increased transparency about political processes and protection of voting rights for our citizens will help to reduce the disharmony currently in our country. This can only act to improve conditions for small businesses, such as mine, to have a brighter future and a broader market appeal.”

- Curtis Lisle
CONSULTANT, KNOWLEDGEVIS LLC.
ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL

“This legislation supports an environment of greater innovation, stronger business starts and more consistent business success in rural and urban areas.”

- R.P. Wacks
CEO, MICROBUSINESS STRATEGIES
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
SIGNATORIES

Rebecca Uber, McDonough, GA
Rebecca Thompson, Malo, WA
Rebecca Evans, Boulder, CO
Rebekkah Hilgraves, Asheville, NC
Reed Fenton, Lake Balboa, CA
Regan Westra, Fernandina Beach, FL
Regina Brooks, Pittsburgh, PA
Regina Dancy, Woodleaf, NC
Reginald McDade, Ankeny, IA
Renee Sabel, San Antonio, TX
Richard Camp, San Bernardino, CA
Richard Metayer, Mystic, CT
Richard Weiner, Kent, OH
Richard Bowie, Edmonds, WA
Richard Boersema, Clarkston, MI
Richard Han, Ann Arbor, MI
Richard Stoff, Columbus, OH
Richard Wall, Richmond, TX
Rick Petershack, Madison, WI
Ritu Chattree, New York, NY
Rob Seltzer, Malibu, CA
Rob Elias, Tucson, AZ
Robert Goos, Colorado City, CO
Robert Goltz, Hollywood, FL
Robert Hakes Jr., Kingsland, GA
Robert Schiffer, Chevy Chase, MD
Robert Smith, York, PA
Robert McManimon-Moe, La Crosse, WI
Robert Conner, Big Bear City, CA
Robert Woll, Bedford, MA
Robert Payne, Roseville, MI
Robert Smith, Great Falls, VA
Robert Chester, New York, NY
Robert Snow, Broken Arrow, OK
Robert Noble, Allegan, MI
Robert Butler, Tucson, AZ
Robertta Kelley, Seattle, WA
Robin Lorentzen, Caldwell, ID
Robynne Limoges, Redwood Falls, MN
Rod Rossignol, Largo, FL
Rodney Comtassel, Missoula, MT
Rogelio Landin, Wellington, FL
Rogelio Garcia, Las Vegas, NV
Roman Fruth, San Antonio, TX
Ronald Breuer, Cutchogue, NY
Ronald Posner, Chagrin Falls, OH
Ronald Carlson, Lanham, MD
Ronald Wilkison, Saint Charles, MO
Ronald M Hyman, Green Cove Springs, FL
Rosalyn Ryan, Arlington Heights, IL
Rose Yore, Battle Creek, MI
Rose Switzer, Mesa, AZ
Rose Reeder, Lock Haven, PA
Ruben Miller, Sterling Heights, MI
Rupert Scofield, Bethesda, MD
Russ Ziegel, Downers Grove, IL
Ruth Sawyer, New Smyrna Beach, FL
Ruth Holloway, Maryville, TN
Ruth Roberts, Irwin, PA
Ruth Eichler, Kalamazoo, MI
S. Ellish, Forest Hills, NY
Sachin Chheda, Milwaukee, WI
Saeid Kamalpour, Wexford, PA
Sally Spelbring, Lawrenceville, GA
Samantha Mucha, Brookpark, OH
Sandra Curley, Lafayette, LA
Sandy Draus, Phoenix, AZ
Sandy Rhein, Metairie, LA
Santanu Borah, Florence, AL
Sara Buchanan, Smyrna, GA
Scott Mooney, Newton, NJ
Scott Urbanowski, Grand Rapids, MI
Scott Purlee, Edgerton, WI
Sean Logan, Lisbon, OH
Sengrithey Pich, Brunswick, OH
Shara Coles, Bellevue, NE
Shari Quinn-Harpbarger, Colorado City, CO
Sharisse Brown, Raleigh, NC
Sheila Shane, Huntington Beach, CA
Sheila Smith, Sarasota, FL

“Strengthening the right of citizens to vote will empower them in all aspects of their lives. They will know their perspective and opinions matter. This recognition will carry over into the workplace. Employees will be more empowered to contribute to innovation when they see how they matter to how this country is run.” - PAMELA ROACH
CEO, BREAKTHROUGH MARKETING TECHNOLOGY
JERSEY CITY, NJ

“With huge, wealthy corporations able to ‘buy’ Congresspeople and Senators, who then are beholden to these donors... small businesses pay a very high price by being excluded in having a say in how this country is governed...” - PATRICIA GUTHRIE
OWNER, GUTHRIE & LARASON
CHALFONT, PA
Community-based economic development is at the heart of my local food systems work. A central part of that is actively engaged community members. We need to do everything we can to lift all the voices.

- PATTI MILLER, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, GROW WITH THE FLOW, LLC BERKELEY SPRINGS, WV