

Tapping America's Potential

November 23, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As leaders of national business organizations in the Tapping America's Potential (TAP) coalition, we share your call for a renewed commitment to improving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in the United States. This is a top priority for the TAP coalition and each of our organizations.

We pledge to work with our member companies to encourage employees who use STEM-related knowledge and skills on the job to become part of a national initiative that is activated locally in communities across the country. These employees can play a critical role in forming partnerships with state leaders, educators, and schools and collaborating in an ongoing campaign of events and activities that will help to improve education outcomes; inspire students to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math careers; improve hands-on laboratory environments in the STEM subjects; and raise student, parent, and public awareness of the importance of science and technology to our nation's future.

Today, we are making three specific commitments:

- First, we will partner over the next four years with the education groups and scientific societies in the STEM Education Coalition to establish 100,000 "communities of support" to improve STEM teaching and learning by strengthening the individual connections between K-12 educators, STEM professionals, entrepreneurs and other business leaders with strong STEM backgrounds. These community relationships have the potential to reach over one million students, and we believe it will be particularly important to include students from underrepresented groups. Through this effort, thousands of diverse and innovative collaborations between communities of STEM professionals, business people and educators will help strengthen student learning experiences across the country.
- Second, we will partner with the STEM Education Coalition to support the involvement of our member companies' employees in *National STEM Week* and *National Lab Day*. During *National STEM Week*, we will work with scientific societies and education organizations to encourage employees to organize, publicize and join in public events that bring together students, parents and educators with STEM professionals, colleges and universities, and other industry partners. These events will be designed to celebrate the importance of science and technology within our society and to inspire young minds. For *National Lab Day*, we will link our members to opportunities for their employees to contribute their knowledge and skills to the improvement of middle and high

school laboratory facilities and foster educational activities that support learning in a hands-on environment in partnership with individual teachers, local teacher teams and schools.

- Third, we will work with the National Governors Association and other state leaders to strengthen existing – and form new – statewide STEM initiatives. Most immediately, we will offer assistance as states develop their applications for the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top competitive grants program.

We applaud you for advancing this agenda with the urgency it deserves. Thank you for your dedication to helping Americans understand the importance of science and technology in addressing the challenges facing our nation. We look forward to working with you to secure a strong, vibrant and prosperous future for the United States.

Sincerely,

Brian K. Fitzgerald
Executive Director
Business-Higher Education Forum

George M. Scalise
President
Semiconductor Industry Association

John J. Castellani
President
Business Roundtable

Ken Wasch
President
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Roger Campos
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Bruce Mehlman
Executive Director
Technology CEO Council

Lt. Gen. Lawrence P. Farrell, Jr., USAF (Ret.)
President & CEO
National Defense Industrial Association

Arthur J. Rothkopf
Senior Vice President
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Tapping America’s Potential (TAP) is composed of prominent business organizations that represent the largest and most innovative companies in America. In 2005, they set the goal of doubling the number of U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates with bachelor’s degrees by 2015. www.tap2015.org