As a main point of entry for global markets, a hub for technology and innovation and home to more than 16 million people (3.5 million of whom are immigrants), the Los Angeles region is one of the world’s economic trend-setters. These assets, combined with more than 100 area colleges and universities, have not only made L.A. an immigrant gateway, but also have positioned the region to be a national leader in job creation and economic growth.

The ACCESS Washington, D.C. delegation is a bipartisan group of business and civic leaders who are working together to create a bold future for L.A. With our nation’s fiscal status still demanding action and bipartisan cooperation from national leaders, our delegation urges Congress and the Obama Administration to take a strategic approach that establishes a long-term plan for economic growth through immigration, infrastructure and trade.

Our agenda identifies the priorities that are essential components to ensuring future success.

**TRANSPORTATION, TRADE & IMMIGRATION**

The amount the U.S. GDP will increase with the elimination of tariffs and related trade barriers

$12 billion

The number of direct and indirect jobs created by the Los Angeles Air Force Base.

50,000

is the amount Southern California will need to invest over the next 25 years to maintain and improve freight and goods movement infrastructure to meet the nation’s import and export demands.

$50 billion

people who rely on the Bay Delta’s aging and fragile system for drinking water that could breach in a major earthquake or flood event.

25 million

is the amount the U.S. GDP will increase with the elimination of tariffs and related trade barriers

$12 billion

passengers served by Los Angeles International Airport annually.

70.7 million

of California jobs that require an education beyond a high school diploma. Only 38 percent of California workers have the skills to fill these positions.

47%

people who are homeless in L.A. each night.

39,461

new jobs immigration reform will create in California.

77,000

The number of direct and indirect jobs created by the Los Angeles Air Force Base.

50,000
Support Free Trade Agreements to advance National Export Initiative goals
Trade agreements create export and investment opportunities for California and the rest of the country. Eliminating tariffs and related trade barriers will increase U.S. GDP by nearly $12 billion and U.S. exports by nearly $11 billion annually. Trade Promotion Authority and the Trans-Pacific Partnership are top priorities for passage in 2015, followed by the TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the European Union.

Support legislation to protect intellectual property and prevent on copyright infringement
Promoting policies that keep pace with 21st century innovation supports the growth of well-paying intellectual property (IP) jobs in trade, entertainment and related industries, preventing the loss of billions in revenue. Congress must work with the Motion Picture Association of America and other stakeholders to maximize website protection and IP enforcement.

Protect funding for Los Angeles Air Force Base
The Los Angeles Air Force Base (LAAFB) accounts for 50,000 direct and indirect local jobs. As a research and development hub, LAAFB has spawned many aerospace advancements and a cyberspace workforce essential to a modern military. LAAFB is of tremendous value to the men and women in the military.

Reauthorize the U.S. Export-Import Bank
With 95 percent of the world’s consumers living outside the United States, it is imperative for policy makers to support the export of U.S. products. Authorization of the Export-Import Bank of the U.S. plays a vital role in helping American companies compete on a level playing field in the global marketplace. The Export-import Bank:
- Helps U.S. exporters compete with foreign firms that have their own export credit agencies
- Supports more small businesses than large businesses
- Generates a large amount of export revenue for the U.S. trade balance
- Operates at no cost to U.S. taxpayers
- Supports a large number of aerospace supplier companies

Support a light rail connection to Los Angeles International Airport
Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is the second busiest airport in the U.S., and the No. 1 origin and destination airport in the world. It serves more than 70 million passengers annually. However, unlike other major international airports, LAX lacks direct light rail access to its facilities. Expediting multi-agency federal approval and identifying funding opportunities will improve mobility in the region and provide travelers with the level of transportation access they expect and deserve when visiting a world-class city and a gateway to Asia and Latin America.

Pass comprehensive immigration reform
Comprehensive immigration reform is critical to a vibrant economy. Priorities include:
- Effective border enforcement
- A pathway to legalization and citizenship that must be earned
- Safeguards to ensure potential citizens are clear of criminal records, English proficient and current with all taxes owed
- Provisions to expand the availability of H-1B visas to retain highly skilled workers and guest worker provisions with a reliable verification system to help employers meet the law
Support comprehensive immigration reform to build skilled workforce
L.A. and the nation need sensible, comprehensive immigration reform to grow our booming technology industry with new entrepreneurs and attract a globally competitive workforce. Congress should establish a streamlined immigration process for future workers and entrepreneurs, including modifications to the guest worker program for an increase in the number of H-1B visas and creation of a new STEM green card category.

Protect company and proprietary data
Consumer data provided to information technology and service companies is the basis of a trusting relationship between customers and businesses. Information technology and service companies should be able to comply with government data collection needs while balancing their right to protect sensitive and proprietary consumer data. Thus, it is critical to establish transparent policies and guidelines for data gathering while ensuring that consumer data is secure through enhanced cyber security protections.

Reform patent law to encourage innovation
Entrepreneurs should be encouraged to focus on building their products and companies without the constant threat of patent trolls and extortion attempts. The Senate should pass comprehensive patent reform legislation to curb the activity of patent assertion entities by shifting the burden of proof and payment onto the aggressors and limiting the liability of end users in court findings.

Increase targeted investments in high-growth industries
With 900 service sites across the country, Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) provide key touch points for small businesses and entrepreneurs to gain mentorship and assistance in growing their companies. Congress should increase targeted investments of federal resources toward SBDCs, which focus on advising companies in high-growth industries.

Permanently ban Internet access taxes
The Internet is a core economic input for media and technology companies. Internet access drives innovation and the success of our regional economy. Congress should keep this innovative tool affordable by passing legislation that would permanently ban federal, state and local governments from imposing Internet access charges, as well as from assessing taxes on electronic commerce.

Increase government open data and transparency
Government data has the potential to revolutionize industries and stimulate entrepreneurs to create innovative solutions and services. It is imperative that government reduces the barriers of entry of accessing data to the best of its ability in order to unlock the potential for imaginative and data-driven outcomes by public and private entities.
Enhance the capacity of provider and hospital networks
Wide access to health care coverage and reduced costs cannot be achieved without full provider participation, and adequate hospital and health center system preparedness. Promoting fair reimbursement rates for primary care and specialty providers will incentivize expansion of the networks for the millions who will gain coverage. Additionally, we urge Congress to increase funding for graduate medical education that will benefit both academic medical centers and children's hospitals. Increased access to providers to meet new demand will be essential to ensuring the promise of coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Promote innovations to coordinate care, lower costs and improve outcomes
We support innovations that encourage delivery of higher quality care while reducing costs - elements that will ultimately stimulate competition and innovation in the health care industry. Pilot programs such as the dual eligible integration demonstration and medical homes should move forward with adequate reimbursement rates and monitoring for quality in order to provide more streamlined care and improve health outcomes and savings.

Protect access to Medicare Advantage plans
The Chamber is committed to preserving the viability and continuity of trusted, meaningful coverage offered through Medicare Advantage (MA) plans for retirees. More than 40 percent of Southern California Medicare beneficiaries have selected a MA plan and many Southern California employers and individuals rely on MA plans for the additional value and protection from catastrophic health care expenses that such MA plans provide. Therefore, we urge the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to hold 2015 reimbursement rates steady to avoid undermining the health care coverage long-trusted and valued by millions of retirees and employers. Further cuts to MA rates would only jeopardize care for the millions of Americans and employers who now enjoy MA plans.

Maintain Medicaid as an important component of Affordable Care Act
Successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act must include sustained support for Medicaid expansion and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Total Medicaid and CHIP enrollment in California has grown by 30 percent in the past year, ensuring access to vital health care services for almost 12 million individuals, and must be protected.

Protect appropriations for homelessness funding
As Los Angeles recovers from funding cuts which temporarily hindered and slowed progress in ending chronic and veteran homelessness in Los Angeles, we urge Congress to continue funding innovative changes to advance our work and protect funding as approved in the HEARTH Act of 2010. We encourage Congress to support at least $2.48 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, as proposed by the President for FY 2016.

Create more affordable housing options
To improve housing affordability in our region, we must reprioritize federal support for housing to assist low-income renters and create workforce housing. There are unique opportunities to support Section 8 and Public Housing reform to work for the lowest-income families and individuals, including those who are chronically homeless and veterans who are unable to access resources through the VA due to complex eligibility rules. Federal Housing Choice vouchers must be restored to pre-sequestration levels in FY 2016. California saw a reduction in 10,000 families assisted through these programs as a result of cuts.

Support innovative changes to reduce veterans’ homelessness
The Opening Doors plan to end veterans’ homelessness by 2015 is making tremendous progress and should be supported by funding the budget requests for Veterans Affairs (VA) homelessness efforts, the Housing and Urban Development portion of HUD-VASH, and Supportive Services for Veteran Families programs for rapid rehousing for veterans and their families. The VA should also have the flexibility it needs to focus on innovative best practices to respond to the needs of the veteran homelessness.
**Increase local water supplies**  
Support administrative, legislative and funding actions to increase local water resources development, including:  
- The study and clean-up of groundwater contamination  
- Increased use of reclaimed and reuse wastewater  
- Expanded use of storm water capture and treatment  
- Educating consumers on how to make more efficient water decisions

**Expedite the Federal response to California’s Drought**  
Support administrative actions and funding to respond to historic drought conditions in California, including:  
- Support for a bi-partisan legislative package that includes permanent drought solutions for California’s Bay Delta water export system  
- Funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies to support enhanced water conservation and drought mitigation efforts

**Improve the long-term water supply reliability of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta**  
Support administrative, legislative and funding actions to:  
- Support programs that meet California’s co-equal goals of a more reliable water supply and an improved Delta ecosystem.  
- Advance emergency response measures and near-term projects in the Delta to address immediate water quality, water supply, flood protection and ecosystem needs.

**Transportation & Goods Movement**

**Expedite transportation reauthorization**  
The looming expiration of MAP-21 and the projected deficit for the Highway Trust Fund jeopardizes our national and regional economies and is leading to the continued deterioration of our nation’s infrastructure. A well-funded, long-term surface transportation authorization bill is needed to ensure a 21st century transportation network. Priorities include:  
- Support reasonable and feasible efforts to make the federal highway trust fund solvent – given that the trust fund is facing a shortfall of $172 billion over the next decade (with spending at current levels, the HTF deficit is $13 billion for 2016).  
- Create America Fast Forward Transportation Bonds that states, cities and transportation agencies can use to build infrastructure projects and create private sector jobs.  
- Encourage Congress to fully fund the annual New Starts appropriations for the Regional Connector ($115 million) Purple Line Segment 1 ($115 million and Purple Line Segment 2 ($100 million) – these figures are consistent with President Obama’s Fiscal Year 2016 Budget for the USDOT.  
- Modernize the 2nd busiest airport in the U.S., LAX, by providing support for the construction of an automated people mover system that would reduce traffic congestion by connecting passengers to our regional light rail system and a planned consolidated rental car center and intermodal transit facility.  
- Support robust funding for programs that help fund critical transportation infrastructure projects like the federal New Starts program, TIGER grant program and TIFIA loan program.  
- Support federal legislation that would permit transportation agencies to consider the hiring of local workers in the evaluation of bids and proposals for highway and transit projects that are paid for in part by federal funds.

**Develop and fund a comprehensive national freight strategy**  
The foundation of America’s global competitiveness is an efficient and reliable goods movement system. The federal government must develop a National Freight Strategic Plan that addresses the infrastructure and operational needs of a 21st Century multimodal freight system. Congress must support this plan by creating a National Freight Program with dedicated funding. Priorities include:  
- Develop and fully fund a National Freight Strategic Plan that recognizes the multimodal national freight network and supports efforts to reduce congestion at the Nation’s major gateways and corridors.  
- Support freight provisions in a long-term transportation reauthorization bill, including establishment of a dedicated, sustainable funding program for the multimodal national freight system. The program should provide added consideration for projects that improve overall system performance, deploy clean freight technologies, leverage private investment, and improve mobility and safety.  
- Support maintenance of our ports and waterways through implementation of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013, especially Section 2102 which provides for equitable return of funds to Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) donors.

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Continue development of natural gas as a fuel of the future

- Support policies that promote future fuels, including electricity and domestic natural gas. This would include supporting the transformation of personal, fleet, fixed and modal transportation and the infrastructure needed to support it, as also the use of electricity and domestic natural gas, including new distributed generation applications like combined heat and power, micro-turbines and fuel cell technologies, and the development of electric and natural gas vehicles and complimentary fueling infrastructure. These policies and the focus on diversity within the advanced technologies, will improve air quality, create domestic businesses and jobs, reduce dependence on energy imports and accelerate economic growth.
- Correct methodological flaws in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s annual greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory to accurately reflect the low GHG profile of natural gas.
- Pursue energy policies and incentives that help expand the capture and use of biogas to increase the availability of renewable resources, reduce waste products and improve air quality.
- Promote allocation of research and development resources in the energy and defense departments towards advanced technologies that support direct energy use, power generation and transportation fueling.
- Support the section 30D Plug-In Electric Drive Vehicle Credit, which provides consumers between $2,500 and $7,500 credit on the purchase of a plug-in vehicle and phases out when manufacturers reach 200,000 in sales.

Invest in energy efficiency and advanced technologies

- Promote new opportunities provided by the Department of Energy’s Better Buildings Challenge including the growth of its Better Plants Program and expansion into Supply Chains and Water Savings.
- Support bi-partisan national energy efficiency legislation to incentivize the use of energy-efficient technology.
- Increase collaboration between federal and local authorities to invest in electrification of the Port of Los Angeles and freight transportation.

Support long-term investment in renewable energy development

- Modify the Business Energy Investment Tax Credit’s “placed-in-service requirement” with a “commence construction” standard – as Congress has done with the renewable electricity production tax credit. Doing so would allow the solar industry to make full and effective use of the 30 percent ITC through 2016.
- Promote long-term investment in solar energy development and jobs by extending the business energy investment tax credit for solar beyond 2016.
- Extend the renewable electricity production tax credit (PTC) for wind, biomass, geothermal and hydroelectric, which was allowed to expire on December 31, 2014 after a one-year extension in the 2014 Tax Increase Prevention Act.

Support the Revitalization of the Los Angeles River

- Support funding from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and Environmental Protection Agency to implement the US Army Corps of Engineer’s plan for the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration. The revitalization of the LA River is an important regional driver for sustainability, affordable housing, health and economic growth, with significant potential to leverage private sector investment.
Early Education

The business community applauds the Congress and the White House for bringing national attention to the importance of strengthening our nation by investing in our children. The past few years have resulted in significant federal and state action on early childhood education and we’re excited to see this momentum continue in 2015 by considering the following:

- Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and incorporate early learning to ensure a strong and seamless alignment of P-16.
- Strengthen early education and children’s health programs, including Home Visitation.
- Support early childhood education programs, while also ensuring quality.
- Strengthen the early childhood education workforce career ladders.
- Support children’s health programs, including childhood obesity prevention.
- Expand children’s health programs, including childhood obesity prevention, to ensure students are ready to learn.
- Extend and expand evidence-based, voluntary home visiting.
- Increase the Child Tax Credit to make it more widely available to middle-income families.

Pass reauthorization of Perkins and Elementary and Secondary Education Act

- Support reauthorization of Perkins and Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including implementing high quality standards and performance-based assessments.
- Support an accountability framework that respects state leadership and models based on continuous improvement and a commitment to closing the achievement gap.
- Support science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) initiatives.
- Support the shift from a prescriptive federal compliance orientation to clearer goals that will maintain accountability for all students while granting needed flexibility.
- Ensure that achievement standards prepare students to be college and career ready by having the necessary 21st century knowledge and skills.
- Address the growing school-to-prison phenomenon by incorporating school-wide factors that report on school climate outcomes.
- Institute Linked Learning and Career Pathways to lower dropout rates and improve career readiness.
- Support the incorporation of Linked Learning into ESEA as proposed to Congress in 2011 in Education for Tomorrow’s Job Act (H.R. 3154 and S. 1686) to promote meaningful integration of academics with career and technical education.

Reauthorize Higher Education Act

As businesses must invest wisely for the future, our nation must make investments in intellectual capital to ensure our future economic prosperity. As Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education Act, we support efforts to incentivize innovation in higher education, and challenge institutions to improve affordability and student success outcomes, while investing in increased access to college for low-income and underrepresented students. Priorities include:

- Support reauthorization of the Higher Education Act with an emphasis on promoting equity for students pursuing post-secondary education.
- Simplifying and redesigning federal financial aid programs to focus on student access and success; maintaining investment in need-based aid (Pell), and student support programs such as TRIO and GEAR UP.
- Support efforts to drive a culture of continuous innovation and quality improvement in higher education, including the expansion of credit for prior learning policies, and the adoption of competency-based education models to decrease time to completion and improve postsecondary success.
- Increase accountability and transparency to enable students to make informed choices as they consider their postsecondary education options by providing more and better information to consumers.

Workforce Development

Middle-skill jobs are at the intersection of economic growth for employers and economic opportunity for individuals. However, employers in key industries struggle to find skilled workers. In L.A. the skills gap is threatening the regions’ economic growth and limiting opportunities for struggling Angelenos. As we develop funding priorities and policies, we must make sure that investments in training and education are targeted to meet the full range of skills needed by local industries. Therefore it is vital to:

Invest in workforce development programs

- We need greater and more effective public investments in workforce education and training tied to market- and employer-relevant outcomes.
- Despite bipartisan support, federal funding for key education and workforce programs has declined by 14 percent since 2010. We should support economic growth by funding federal workforce programs.

Adopt Policies to meet the skilled workforce needs of U.S. business and industry

- Provide resources and services to assist in reintegrating eligible veterans into the labor force.
- Invest in sector intermediaries to create regional industry partnerships to improve education and training.
- Support critical investments in youth employment training programs.
ACCESS Washington, D.C. — Los Angeles on the Hill is a collaboration of these partnering organizations:

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Business Council
Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed)
Los Angeles Unified School District
Metro
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Valley Industry & Commerce Association

Steering Committee Chair:
Gilbert F. Ivey, Assistant General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Lead Staff:
Ruben Gonzalez, Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Political Affairs, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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For more information on ACCESS Washington, D.C. contact Ruben Gonzalez, 213.580.7568 or rgonzalez@lachamber.com.