



**Robert L. Johnson**  
Founder & Chairman

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Dave Reichert  
Chairman  
House Ways & Means Committee  
Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures  
1136 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Ranking Member  
House Ways & Means Committee  
Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures  
1136 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Reichert and Ranking Member Neal:

I would like to thank you for convening this hearing on the significant financial burdens that family businesses, particularly minority-owned family businesses, face in planning for and paying the estate tax.

As a minority business owner, and I believe I speak for the majority of minority businessmen and businesswomen, I feel that the estate tax is specifically unfair to the first generation of higher net worth African Americans who, despite being subject to historic social and economic discrimination that has severely limited their access to capital and business opportunity, have accumulated wealth through hard work and entrepreneurship. This level of taxation continues to pose a serious threat to the likelihood that present-day African American-owned businesses can be preserved as part of a family's long-term legacy. Full repeal of the estate tax would allow African Americans to pass the full fruits of their business success to the next generation and thereby laying the foundation for a permanent minority ownership class that can contribute to the economic growth and development of the United States economy.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Johnson  
Founder, Black Entertainment Television (BET)  
Founder and Chairman, The RLJ Companies