

Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady and members of this Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of the American taxpayer.

America's economic engine is the envy of the world. Whether one looks at manufacturing, mining, medicine, agriculture, technology or services, America leads the world in innovation and productivity. There is a reason millions from around the world risk everything to come to our nation, and very few wish to leave it.

Some in Washington think the politicians have created this mighty economic engine. They are mistaken. For while government certainly has a role to play in creating a climate to foster economic growth, there's a reason the old Ronald Reagan quip that the 9 most feared words in the English language are "I'm from the government and I'm here to help" still draws knowing laughter more than 30 years later.

America's greatness lies not in its government but in its people. It's the millions of men and women who get up every day and go to work at the factory or on their farm, who drive trucks and pilot trains and planes, who work in finance and industry, who scrape together hard-earned savings so they can start the small business of their dreams; they are the source of America's greatness.

The American people, so much more than we, best know how to spend and invest their time and money. I believe it is our duty and responsibility as the people's representatives to ensure we enact legislation reflective of that fact. We need to write policy and enact laws that enable, encourage and entrust Americans from all walks of life and all manner of backgrounds to spend their own money as they deem best.

So, as legislation comes before this committee to encourage and stimulate the self-sufficient, entrepreneurial spirit which has been at the core of American greatness, I ask you to thoughtfully and carefully examine it and not be skeptical when you see opportunities to look outside the box.

As I talk to constituents from my district who are leaders in unions and the trades, manufacturers and home builders, the constant refrain I hear is their inability to find skilled laborers to replace the generation that is rapidly approaching retirement. I believe those who desire to pursue such noble vocations should be able to fund their training through pre-tax dollars in the same manner as those who pursue two and four-year academic degrees.

One of the most pressing, if not the most pressing problem, facing all our constituents is resolving the availability and affordability issues present in our health care system. While there is no single, easy solution to these challenges, I believe one of the solutions is giving Americans more control and accountability when it comes to where and how they spend their health care dollars. So, when legislation comes before this committee to expand Flexible Spending Accounts and Health Savings Accounts to include all Americans, I hope you will favorably look upon it.

We also need to lift from the backs of American workers and farmers the burden of tariffs and unfair trade practices. For too long politicians have sat by while countries around the world engaged in a system of trade that was neither free nor fair costing hard-working Americans jobs and income. President Trump has set in motion the consideration of the USMCA which will level the playing field with our two largest trading partners. I strongly encourage Speaker Pelosi to send this Agreement to the floor of the House and for representatives from both parties to support it.

As we aspire to give the American people more flexibility and control over their finances and, thus, their lives, those initiatives will run right through this committee. I encourage my fellow representatives to consider those initiatives thoughtfully and thoroughly, and at the end of the day, to trust that when the American people are encouraged to live and direct their own lives, America prospers and thrives.

Thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member for this opportunity, and I yield back.