

This Election, Americans are Demanding Action. Here's Where to Start on Day One.



Of the many precedent-shattering aspects of this remarkable election year, massive voter turnout is one of the most striking. Ahead of Election Day, more than 80 million Americans have voted absentee or early, which is equivalent to 59.5% of total voter turnout in 2016. What do we make of this?

Americans are feeling the tangible negative effects of Washington gridlock.

Voters want action—action to bring the pandemic under control, put people back to work, keep our economy open while keeping people safe, save small businesses, rebuild communities and lives, and chart a brighter, stronger future for our country.

The business community wants action too. We stand here on Election Day and call on our leaders to act collaboratively and govern responsibly.

After all those votes are counted, we know that we will likely have one of two scenarios: A divided government or a unified Democratic government. In either case, a commitment to collaborative governing will be absolutely essential to our nation's recovery from the pandemic and the recession. Ongoing division and gridlock will deepen the harm already endured by so many and will result in the economy, businesses, and workers suffering the effects long after these crises recede. Likewise, partisan dominance right out of the gate will undermine our

leaders' ability to work productively and cooperatively on issues that actually can—and must—get done to support short-term and long-term growth.

History is our guide.

In 2008, a “blue wave” ushered in President Obama, the largest House majority in 15 years, and a solidly Democratic Senate to form a wall of unified power. Democrats prioritized a controversial and highly partisan health care bill over a more broadly supported infrastructure push. They won the Affordable Care Act fight but lost their House majority two years later and battled division and partisanship for the remainder of the Obama administration.

In 2016, President Trump won the White House, and the Republicans retained control of the House and Senate. Under their unified government, the first order of business was repealing the Affordable Care Act—a move that was also controversial and highly partisan—despite calls by the U.S. Chamber and many others to focus on our crumbling infrastructure first. As they made incremental progress toward dismantling the ACA, the cost was losing the House in the midterms. With some welcome exceptions, including passage of USMCA and the CARES Act this year, partisan gridlock has remained the dominant feature of this Congress.

Heading into 2021, newly elected and reelected officials should choose to govern for the betterment of the country.

The first order of business is pandemic relief. We cannot let America's small businesses, displaced workers, and disproportionately impacted industries hang in the balance any longer.

If the election results in a status quo outcome and we have all the same players in the White House and on Capitol Hill, they must immediately return to the negotiating table and work through their differences. This effort should start in the lame-duck session. If Vice President Biden wins—and especially if there's a blue wave—the inclination will be to wait until next year to try for a bigger package. But how many businesses will suffer or fail in the meantime? The Chamber will put maximum pressure on our leaders to pass an aid package as quickly as possible, while continuing to provide support to the businesses and workers who will struggle through the difficult months ahead.

The next priority must be infrastructure. We lobbied hard for this in 2009 and 2017, and we'll double-down on our advocacy next year. Why? Investing in rebuilding our infrastructure is one of the fastest and most direct ways to spur growth and create jobs now, while strengthening and sustaining our modern economy for the long-term. Importantly, there is widespread bipartisan agreement that it needs to be done.

If the election yields another two years of divided government, progress on an infrastructure package could help lawmakers hit the reset button on two years of gridlock and show their constituents that they are capable of governing. The Chamber is ready to help bridge the partisan differences and get a bill signed into law.

Whether and how our leaders choose to govern in the critical months and years to come remains to be seen. **But this much is very clear: no matter who wins, the Chamber is ready. We will**

vigorously work to advance shared priorities. We will negotiate in good faith when compromise is necessary. We will fight back vigorously when we disagree. And we will continue to speak up and win for American job creators. Our mission is to serve our members, and our duty is to help our government during this time of remarkable uncertainty, challenge, and opportunity.

–Suzanne Clark, President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

- Read more about the [U.S. Chamber's priorities here](#).
- We have voter tools available through [VoteForJobs.com](#).