



ILLINOIS
CHAMBER

Message from the President



Todd Maisch

President & CEO

*Illinois Chamber of
Commerce*

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Both parties have been guilty of using immigration policy as a political club and dangling infrastructure funding and construction projects without action. This must end.

[Want bipartisan cooperation in Washington? Focus on infrastructure and immigration](#)

By: Todd Maisch

There is little doubt most Illinoisans are looking forward to moving past the tumultuous political conflicts of 2020 and a new start in 2021. While discord remains very real in Washington, there is ample reason for optimism that we can advance common goals that will make a positive difference in people's lives.

President Joe Biden and leaders of both parties need to match real actions with their rhetoric of national unification and respect of differing views. Meaningful, thorough discourse and passage of policies that have consensus support is the best way to rebuild respect and goodwill.

The good news is such common ground is easier to find than many suspect. No two issues are better positioned to restore a constructive, bipartisan momentum in Washington than investment in our critical infrastructure and immigration reform.

Both parties have been guilty of using immigration policy as a political club and dangling infrastructure funding and construction projects without action. This must end.

The Illinois Chamber is a strong supporter of border security and the rule of law. However, the inability of Washington to find a compromise allowing undocumented children to remain here as productive members of the only nation they have ever known is a staggering failure. Without a permanent legislative resolution, more than 40,000 Illinois DACA recipients, their employers and educational institutions all remain in an unacceptable state of uncertainty. When nearly 75% of Americans, including most Republicans, support a DACA compromise the time has come to act.

America must also do a better job of welcoming the world's entrepreneurs and business talent, individuals that admire our economy, culture, and freedoms. Immigrants form nearly 25% of all new businesses in our country and provide tremendous talent to America's fastest growing industries. Yet our current immigration system forces thousands of individuals who want to enhance our economy back to other nations where they put their talents to use.

Equally as important to America's economy is the foundation of transportation, energy, water, and communications infrastructure our country is built upon. Despite its importance, we have let this infrastructure begin to crumble and fall behind our economic competitors in the world. Many states, including Illinois, have shown they can muster bipartisan support to invest in our economic future by investing in our critical infrastructure. Washington should follow their bipartisan lead and pass a comprehensive infrastructure bill.

The Illinois Chamber supports the U.S. Chamber's call for passing such a bill by July 4 of 2021. US Chamber President Tom Donahue is leading an

impressive array of groups all committed to swift action. While this coalition may not agree on all issues, the Build by the 4th effort is the most serious initiative to address infrastructure needs in decades.

The partisan and ideological divide in our nation is not about small things. The role of government in our economy and our families' lives should be subject to real and even impassioned debate. However, we need to return to the norms of discourse that have been so successful in advancing our nation. Accomplishments on these two vital issues can be just the progress we need.

Sincerely,

Todd Maisch
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