



# Defending Representative Democracy & Free Enterprise

## *The Critical Role of Colorado Business*

### Political Dysfunction is Undermining Trust and Creating New Risks for Business

**Most businesses work hard to earn trust.** They know trust improves employee engagement, innovation, customer and stakeholder relationships, and supports the political and economic stability on which business depends.

#### **Yet, trust in U.S. institutions – including trust in business – is dangerously low.**

According to several recent studies, low confidence in our political, economic systems and the outsized influence of moneyed interests in shaping public policy are major factors. There is widespread worry about the integrity of our electoral system and the rise of “pay-to-play,” where firms and special interests compete based on political favors, rather than the value they create in the marketplace. This pattern fosters cronyism, partisanship and gridlock, blocks collaboration on big challenges like infrastructure, health care and climate change, creates skeptical consumers and employees, and heightens brand risk.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Colorado Business Needs “Corporate Civic Responsibility”

**In this high-stakes environment, businesses are under increasing pressure to demonstrate “corporate civic responsibility.”** Employees want to know where their company stands on key issues, and they expect a culture that supports civic engagement.<sup>2</sup> NGOs, customers and other stakeholders are holding companies to a higher and higher bar, increasing reputational risk for companies that do not actively align their actions – including government affairs activities -- with their stated brand commitments.<sup>3</sup> Forward-thinking CEOs are declaring new commitments to stakeholders and to the long-term health of our economy and society.<sup>4</sup> And for some companies, the time has come to speak out on specific policy and reform proposals.

**Given these shifting expectations companies of every size would be wise to develop a Corporate Civic Responsibility Strategy to strengthen public trust and ensure their actions support a healthy civil society.** To assist in that process, sponsors of several civic reform groups are hosting an informal gathering for Colorado businesspeople to learn more about the trends and what “corporate civic responsibility” might mean for their firm. **Congressman Ken Buck** has been invited as our featured guest.

**Join us for an informal gathering to explore these trends and what they mean for Colorado businesses.**

**Wednesday, December 4, 4pm – 6pm**  
**WorkAbility at the Sudler**  
**1576 Sherman Street, Denver, CO @ E. 16<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

Light Refreshments Served

**Please join us! [RSVP here!](#)**

*5,000 MBAs identified our current political system as the number one barrier to U.S. competitiveness.*

*“Problems Unsolved & a Nation Divided,” Michael Porter, et al, U.S. Competitiveness Project, Harvard Business School, Sep 2016<sup>5</sup>*

*“The concentration of power in D.C. attracts the worst and tempts the best, making it extremely difficult for men and women of character to arise and lead our nation to a healthier place. The best way to drain the swamp in Washington is to remove the incentive for abuse.”*

*Ken Buck (U.S. Rep, R-CO), Author, “Drain the Swamp”<sup>6</sup>*

*“Coloradans deserve to know who is trying to influence our votes. We must reform money in politics to be able to detect and deter corruption, stop foreign financial influence, and increase transparency.”*

*Jena Griswold, Secretary of State, Colorado (D-Denver), 2019<sup>7</sup>*

*“Our job as CEOs now includes driving what we think is right. It’s not exactly political activism, but it is action on issues beyond business.”*

*Brian Moynihan, CEO, Bank of America, responding to declining public trust in the U.S. Edelman Trust Barometer, 2018<sup>8</sup>*

Business for America ([bfa.us](http://bfa.us))

Ranked Choice Voting for Colorado ([rcvforcolorado.org](http://rcvforcolorado.org))

Business for American Promise ([AmericanPromise.net/Business](http://AmericanPromise.net/Business))

<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/2WT1uit> (Edelman 2019) <sup>2</sup> <https://pewrsr.ch/2PUV6WP> (Pew Democracy 2018) <sup>3</sup> <http://bit.ly/2CmRiFK> (CPA Collision Course) <sup>4</sup> <https://nyti.ms/2NRAEU9> (Biz Roundtable) <sup>5</sup> <https://hbs.me/2NLi0bH> (HBS Competitiveness) <sup>6</sup> <https://amzn.to/32ilcW> (Drain the Swamp book) <sup>7</sup> <http://bit.ly/2X0lkYp> (CO Sec’y of State) <sup>8</sup> <http://bit.ly/2JZwUP7> (Edelman 2018)