



To BCG's network around the world,

Each week when I write to you, I try to do it from a global perspective, despite my eight-month physical confinement in New York. Today, following a truly remarkable US election, I am writing to you as an American.

Now that we have an announced result in the race for president, we can take stock of the past few weeks—and I think there's a lot to feel good about: extraordinary turnout on both sides, peaceful political expression, what thus far appears to be a clean and effective process of voting and vote counting (particularly impressive during a pandemic), and inspiring dedication from election officials, volunteers, and state and local officials.

The business community has also played a very positive role: encouraging election participation, acting as a voice of moderation, and now [supporting the validity of President-elect Biden's victory](#), along with other outcomes in which candidates of all political stripes have won hard-fought campaigns. Social media companies stepped up dramatically; we've seen a strong effort to reduce the propagation of false and misleading election information, and very few signs of election interference.

So where do we go from here? We'll hear many ideas in the days to come. Personally, I would like to suggest that this moment calls for bridge building and boldness.

The divisions in US politics have always been substantial, but they have become much starker in recent years. We cannot go on like this. The problems we have to tackle are too big and the stakes too high. In his initial post-election speeches, President-elect Biden has focused on bringing us together. This will not be easy, and it requires an openness from both sides, but it is a requirement if the US is to create a society able to tackle 21st-century challenges and contribute globally to advancing progress.

Along with building bridges across the political divide, there is a requirement for bold change. Bold does not mean radical. This election firmly anchored the US in the center of the political spectrum with a closely divided Congress. But the center can and must be bold, too. Here's some of what we have to do:

- Gain control of the pandemic in ways that respect the need to preserve both lives and livelihoods, and accelerate vaccine rollout and uptake during 2021.
- Adopt a climate agenda grounded in market economics, innovation, and job creation that can make dramatic progress toward a net-zero target by the middle of the century.
- Pursue an infrastructure agenda that leverages both the public and private sectors to rebuild our physical infrastructure and boldly address the digital divide that holds so many back in rural and urban communities.
- Design an immigration plan that builds on the compromises that were nearly enacted a decade ago.
- Speed up progress on racial equity and reforms to criminal justice with appreciation and respect for law enforcement, and push hard for diversity and inclusiveness across business and society.
- Build on the successful enactment of President Trump's bipartisan-supported US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, to pursue more 21st-century trade deals.

We can't accomplish these goals if we remain as divided in the US as we have. We'll need Democrats to compromise on some of the promises they made to their base during the election. We'll need Republicans in the Senate to be open to compromise in the short term even as they work to regain the presidency in 2024.

Through all this, the business community has an essential role to play. Over the past year, the Business Roundtable has advocated for practical, ambitious, and balanced policies aimed at each of the areas above. These policies are unlikely to gain the support of the extremes from either party but can contribute to a dialogue designed to open up space for compromise and progress.

Business leaders individually must also do their part. With last week's outcome, businesses will likely continue to benefit from low taxes, low interest rates, and—I hope soon—another stimulus package that will preserve the economy and individual livelihoods through the depths of an ongoing pandemic. In turn, we must each take on the responsibility not only to drive our own performance but to support agendas that strengthen the economy and society, act with purpose, and speak with moral clarity and authentic leadership.

I am not naïve about the road ahead. But at this pivotal and transitional moment, and following a year filled with challenges, I choose to be both bold and hopeful.



Rich Lesser  
Chief Executive Officer



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