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President & CEO

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Dear America:

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a small group of colonists had a vision - that people should have the right to govern themselves, to speak freely, and to build a life through their own labor and enterprise. New York State was at the very forefront of that vision.

The founders understood that political freedom means little without economic freedom — the right to own property, start an enterprise, and keep the fruits of one's labor. New York embraced that principle early and never let it go. In 1776, New York State's economy was overwhelmingly agrarian - farms, small mills, and river and coastal trade sustained a population of roughly 200,000 people scattered across the entire state. At that time, there was no New York Stock Exchange, no manufacturing base to speak of, and if there had been, there was no reliable way to move goods beyond a horse cart or a sailing vessel. Earning a living was modest, markets were local, and most New Yorkers worked the land simply to get by.

Today, New York is home to nearly 20 million people and has an economy that, on its own, ranks among the largest in the world. A state with only a handful of trading posts and family farms, is now the home of more than 427,000 businesses statewide. In addition, New York businesses generate close to a trillion dollars a year in sales revenue and employ millions of workers in various industries. New York State is now home to advanced manufacturing, life sciences, finance, agriculture technology, energy and more.

That is the story of economic development in New York State — not a single moment, but two hundred fifty years of continuous reinvention. Each generation of New Yorkers inherited an economy from the one before it, added their own ingenuity and labor to it, and passed it forward stronger than they found it.

The Business Council of New York State, Inc. is proud to carry on that tradition and responsibly. Every day, we advocate and work on behalf of businesses, both large and small, that continue to anchor communities across New York State. We believe - as the founders did - that New Yorkers pursuing honest enterprise is one of the most powerful forces for economic growth and competitiveness.

We owe them a debt that is best repaid not in words, but in action — by continuing to build, to compete, and to create opportunity, so that the New York and the America we hand to the next generation are stronger than the ones we inherited.

Happy 250th Birthday, America. New York was there from the very beginning, and we vow to hold true to our name - "The Empire State" for another 250 years and beyond.

Best,