

2019 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Partnership supports a robust trade agenda so Iowa companies can continue to export goods and services around the globe to create jobs for American workers. Therefore, The Partnership has dedicated itself to building Greater Des Moines' (DSM's) global presence through increasing exports and foreign direct investment. Those two goals are integral parts of the Global DSM Trade and Investment Strategy, which was developed as part of the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JP Morgan Chase. The program equips metropolitan leaders with the information, policy ideas and global connections needed to bolster regional positions in the global economy.

In 2017, Iowa exported \$13.3 billion in manufactured and value-added agricultural goods. Iowa's largest market was Canada, which posted merchandise exports of \$4.07 billion or 30.4 percent of the state's total. Iowa's largest merchandise export category is machinery, which accounted for \$2.1 billion.

It is important for Congress and the Administration to support pro-trade policy initiatives, trade and investment policies and agreements that will help American companies and workers to remain the most competitive in the world.

Many foreign countries still maintain steep tariffs and other barriers against U.S. exports, while the U.S. market is largely wide open. Across the world, there are nearly 300 free trade agreements (FTAs) in force; the U.S. has FTAs in effect with 20 countries. American workers and farmers deserve the opportunity to compete — and succeed — on a level playing field.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following pro-growth international trade and investment policies and principles:

- Congressional approval of the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA). The USMCA preserves and strengthens the benefits of North American trade for American workers, farmers, businesses and consumers.
- Reach a new trade agreement with China, as commercial engagement and the expansion of trade and investment ties between the U.S. and China benefit both countries and their business communities.
- Negotiate additional bilateral investment treaties with major markets around the globe.
- Modernize U.S. export controls to enhance national security and competitiveness.
- Boost business and leisure travel and the jobs they sustain by improving the visa process and expanding the Visa Waiver program.
- Continue the process of normalizing relations with Cuba by removal of remaining trade and financial restrictions.
- Approve nominees to the Export-Import Bank of the U.S. to give the board the quorum it needs to approve transactions over \$10 million.

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IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXPORT ASSISTANCE

The Partnership supports continued funding of the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Iowa has been fortunate to receive substantial funds via the STEP program in recent years. These funds have been awarded predominantly to small businesses as grants for activities that increase international sales (i.e. exhibiting in international trade shows and trade missions). The success of this program is demonstrated through this phenomenal return on investment. In addition, these funds have assisted small businesses that might not have considered exporting due to limited budgets.

REGIONAL EXPORT ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM

The Partnership supports funding for an Economic Development Administration program to assist with the development and implementation of Regional Export Plans.

The Administration has proposed investing \$12 million to promote regional export strategies with the Regional Export Challenge. The Regional Export Challenge, a competitive grant program, will support those regions that develop and implement sustainable export action plans to proactively identify and support firms and sectors with the greatest export potential.