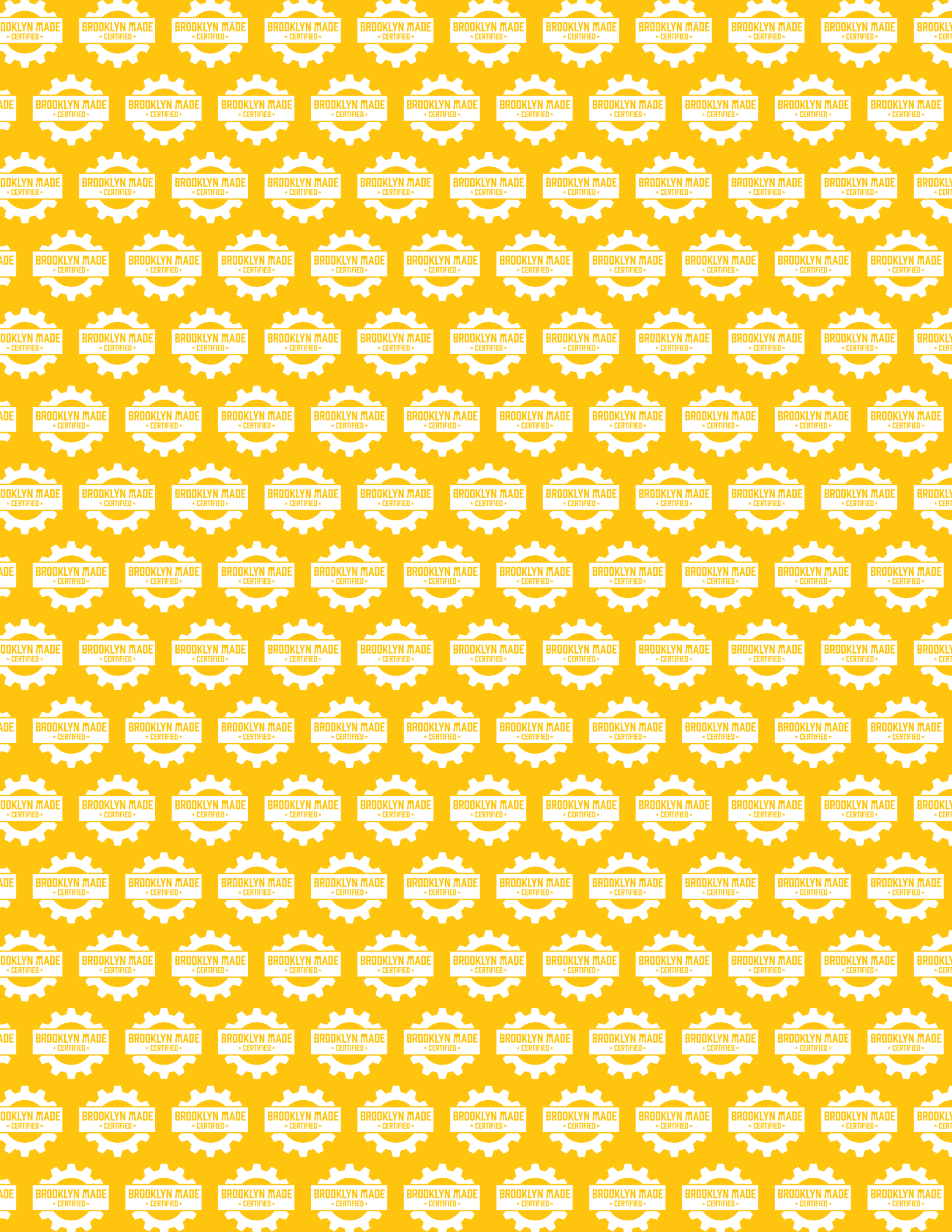


FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

BROOKLYN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2019





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Dear Friends,

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is pleased to present its 2019 Federal Legislative Agenda. The primary purpose of this document is to promote Brooklyn as the best place to do business while representing the needs of our diverse business community. Here you will find the Brooklyn Chamber's positions on a variety of federal policies that impact the borough's economy, from transportation and climate change, to healthcare and workforce development.

With a focus on promotion, support, advocacy and convening, the Brooklyn Chamber continues to promote economic development across the borough and serves as an advocate for its member businesses. The Brooklyn Alliance is the not-for-profit economic development affiliate of the Brooklyn Chamber, which works to address the needs of businesses through direct service programs. Brooklyn Alliance Capital is the third affiliate of the Brooklyn Chamber and provides loans to immigrant and minority-owned small businesses.

Topping our list of legislative priorities are transportation and infrastructure investment in projects such as the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX), job-driven training programs to build up a proficient workforce, modernization of the country's power grid and a move towards sustainable and renewable energy, and affordable healthcare options for businesses.

This year's Legislative Agenda would not be possible without the work of the Brooklyn Chamber's Board of Directors and Government Affairs Committee and the federal delegation that represents Brooklyn, USA. Of course, we would be remiss if we did not thank our members, who drive all that we do.

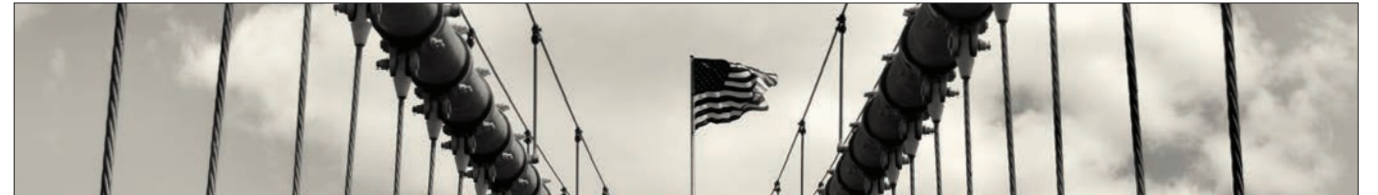
Best Regards,

RANDY PEERS
PRESIDENT & CEO

ANA OLIVEIRA
BOARD CHAIR

GIL CYGLER
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

ANTONIA YUILLE-WILLIAMS
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR



MEET THE BROOKLYN DELEGATION

SENATORS

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

HON. KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

REPRESENTATIVES

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

HON. MAX ROSE

HON. HAKEEM JEFFRIES

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

HON. JERROLD NADLER

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ



TOP ISSUES

FROM OUR BROOKLYN BUSINESS LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

Key Findings: Through the Brooklyn Chamber's Brooklyn Business Legislative Survey, businesses are polled on a variety of topics, from their outlook on the economy to their greatest obstacles to growth. These are key findings we wanted to highlight:



TRANSPORTATION

The majority of businesses are not satisfied with the state of Brooklyn's transportation infrastructure. Businesses are strongly supportive of new transit projects that promote inter-borough and outer borough connectivity such as the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) and the Triboro rail line and would like to see more ferry service in New York City.



CLIMATE CHANGE

This is one of Brooklyn business's top issues with 97% of survey responders reporting that they are "very" concerned about climate change and the effect it will have on the economy overall. Efforts like the "Green New Deal" are supported by businesses in Brooklyn as they are moderately or very concerned about the effect climate change may have on their business in the future.



HEALTHCARE

The current healthcare system is a source of concern for Brooklyn businesses with the majority of survey responders believing the system should change. However, our members are divided on whether a single payer system is a good or bad idea.



WORKFORCE/SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Difficulty finding skilled workers and the need to upskill existing workers is an urgent business priority for many Brooklyn businesses; a large majority view automation as having a positive impact on their future growth as well. 86% of businesses support efforts by the government to encourage Minority and Women Owned Business to develop and grow.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

SKILLED WORKFORCE AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Brooklyn has one of the fastest growing economies in the United States. The Brooklyn Chamber supports Congressional efforts to provide more job-driven training programs, promote middle-class career pathways, and expand access to education programs that prepare students for jobs of the 21st Century.

Our members believe that the key to a productive and successful business is access to a pool of well trained and proficient workers. The majority of our businesses see upskilling workers as an urgent business priority. The Brooklyn Chamber encourages the federal government to invest in education, training, upskilling, and reskilling opportunities to keep our workforce adapted to the changing world economy. We encourage Congress to invest authorized levels through the FY 2020 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill. If Brooklyn is to continue as a hub for innovation, we must ensure that our workforce can compete with well-financed major international forces and that we maintain the highest level of workforce proficiencies.

IMMIGRATION

Our businesses believe that their diverse workforce would be adversely affected by more restrictive immigration policies. Nearly 40% of Brooklyn's population is foreign-born, and immigrants contribute significantly to the local workforce. Immigrants play a major role in Brooklyn's economy, drive entrepreneurship and innovation. The Brooklyn Chamber supports policies and legislation that allow immigrants to continue to grow and flourish in the borough. Specifically, we support immigration provisions to expand the availability of H-1B visas to retain highly skilled workers and relief from the H-2B cap for seasonal workers.



MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED ENTERPRISES (M/WBE)

Brooklyn Chamber members overwhelmingly support efforts by the government to encourage M/WBEs to develop and grow. Members would like to see federal requirements to increase procurement, workforce, and employment opportunities for M/WBEs, including a concise federal M/WBE certification process that would include a unified application for city, state, and federal certification.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Brooklyn Chamber supports efforts by Congress and the Administration to improve, fund, and modernize New York's infrastructure. A majority of Brooklyn businesses are not satisfied with Brooklyn's transportation infrastructure. They overwhelmingly support increased public transit options, particularly ones that move people throughout Brooklyn and the outer boroughs. Many of our businesses have employees that commute from other parts of Brooklyn in addition to Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx, and our current transit system prioritizes movement from the outer boroughs in and out of Manhattan. To this end, our members support the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX), a light rail line that would connect Queens and Brooklyn along the waterfront. They would also like to see more ferry service. In addition, they support the development of the Triboro line for passengers (currently used for freight trains only), which would move people from Bay Ridge in Brooklyn throughout the borough, up through Queens, and into the Bronx, further promoting intra and inter borough job development.

Our members strongly encourage Congress to significantly increase public transportation and passenger rail funding. In the Fiscal Year 2020 Transportation Appropriations bill, Congress should build upon the funding levels provided in recent years and provide additional funding above levels authorized in the FAST Act for these critical infrastructure investments.

This will undoubtedly contribute to economic development and small business success in Brooklyn. Transportation remains among the top concerns of our membership and the Brooklyn Chamber urges the federal government to invest in transportation projects that will improve the flow of people and goods throughout the city.



The Brooklyn Chamber understands the critical importance of the Gateway Program to the Northeast and U.S. Economy. A majority of our businesses are concerned about the status of the Gateway project. We urge Congress and the federal government to commit the resources to addressing one of the nation's most crucial transportation projects and to adopt the funding levels necessary for safe public transportation and passenger-rail included through the House and Senate THUD Appropriations bills.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Brooklyn Chamber is supportive of efforts by Congress to modernize the country's telecom infrastructure including pushing for more robust preparations for the implementation of 5G networks that will be essential to a strong 21st century economy. Our businesses rely on telecommunications to operate and build their operations and are concerned about the pace of modernization, particularly New York City's slow pace in adopting 5G technology.

Congress and the Administration must account for the critical role technology plays in modern transportation and infrastructure systems. The Brooklyn Chamber and our members encourage Congress to focus infrastructure modernization efforts on the following areas: enabling smart tech in infrastructure; ensuring the security of digital infrastructure; expanding broadband access nationwide; expediting the deployment of 5G; and encouraging use of digital design and construction technologies.

The Brooklyn Chamber opposes the recent action by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that changed a long-standing guideline related to cable franchising fees. The modifications detrimentally affect public access television stations nationwide. The cable franchising fee is currently capped at 5% of gross revenues on cable bills. The FCC's new rule permits cable providers to deduct in-kind services and Public Access from the established cap. By limiting the pool of funds available for cities to pay for public access channels, the FCC is allowing the further degradation of this vital form of media. Public access channels are critical to ensuring a diverse coverage of news and programming in markets that would otherwise not receive it.



PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

Top of mind for many businesses is privacy protections, and telecommunications providers in Brooklyn also share these concerns. Consumers deserve one set of privacy rules. We recommend that federal legislation create a unified regulatory scheme for privacy, data security, and breach notification, consistent with the standards developed and enforced by the Federal Trade Commission over the past 20 years. Comprehensive federal legislation will help avoid a patchwork of state and local privacy regulations that make it difficult for internet services and applications to be deployed to consumers. It is critical for economic development that consumers and businesses have seamless access to the internet, and consistent standards on privacy, established by the federal government, is a key part of this service delivery.

HEALTHCARE

The Brooklyn Chamber supports healthcare reforms that lead to lower costs, quality focused and coordinated healthcare for employers and consumers.

Healthcare is one of the top concerns for business owners and employees alike. A majority are not satisfied with their current healthcare coverage and cost and believe our current health insurance system should be changed. The Brooklyn Chamber has worked to provide affordable and quality coverage options and assistance to its members but there is still much to be done to lower costs and increase standards of care.

CLIMATE/ENERGY

The Brooklyn Chamber supports efforts to modernize the country's power grid which includes moving towards sustainable and renewable energy. Our member businesses are very concerned about climate change, the effect on the economy overall, and the effect it may have on their companies.

Our members believe business plays a key role in forging solutions that will improve our environment and grow our economy—leaving the world better for generations to come. We support the passage of bipartisan bills promoting energy and climate technology and innovation.



NORTHEAST SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT (NESE) PROJECT

Brooklyn businesses increasingly rely on natural gas for both heat and electricity rather than fuel oil. The shift to natural gas has had a major positive impact on our local environment. The Brooklyn Chamber supports sustainable energy development and increasing supply that comes from renewable resources. However, we must maintain and balance the natural gas supply while alternatives are developed and become scalable. NESE will deliver the reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy that our region needs now for businesses to operate and grow.

OFFSHORE WIND

The Brooklyn Chamber is particularly interested in federal incentives to promote offshore wind development in Brooklyn. New York State signed the largest offshore wind agreement in U.S. history in July of 2019, which is expected to bring hundreds of jobs to South Brooklyn in the coming years. We support federal programs that invest in regional transmission infrastructure, and provide funding for offshore wind construction, production, and workforce development to promote green jobs and increase renewable energy, which will allow for sustainable solutions that promote economic development in the region. Specifically, we support the extension of the Investment Tax Credit for offshore wind (ITC).

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AND RESILIENCY

The Brooklyn Chamber encourages Congress to make changes in the way FEMA operates its disaster recovery efforts. Brooklyn's large waterfront is at severe risk of flooding as sea levels rise, and there are many businesses who have still not recovered from Hurricane Sandy, which occurred over seven years ago. The Brooklyn Chamber encourages Congress to continue making changes to increase integration between FEMA and state agencies, specifically in the disbursement of federal funds. We would also like to see prolonged efforts to better inform businesses of FEMA programs. Lastly, federal investments must be made to boost resiliency efforts in Brooklyn's waterfront communities and surrounding infrastructure to prepare them for the reality of climate change as these neighborhoods continue to grow.



SUPERFUND SITES

Newtown Creek remains an active industrial/municipal waterway. More than 1,500 businesses are located within ¼ mile of the Creek. These businesses provide more than 70,000 good paying jobs in the community, representing 52% of all industrial jobs in NYC. In 2010, under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Newtown Creek was designated a Superfund site. The Brooklyn Chamber supports retaining the essential industrial and municipal character of Newtown Creek and the thousands of jobs it supports, as well as the business community's desire for the cleanup work to begin soon. Our members who are located on and around the Creek support the development of a cleanup plan that recognizes the importance of this essential industrial waterway, addresses business concerns about the impacts of a protracted clean-up and fulfills the community's desire for progress.

The Gowanus Canal is another example of a Brooklyn waterway in need of rehabilitation. A former shipping corridor, the Gowanus was designated a Superfund site by the EPA in 2010. Years of studies and planning have culminated in a start date for cleanup. The Brooklyn Chamber supports this key remediation project to allow for new development and economic opportunities in the area.

HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT AID AND FUNDING FOR THE SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH AGENCIES

The Brooklyn Chamber supports funding for the core federal student aid programs and the health and scientific research agencies. These programs lead to an educated workforce and the development of new health cures and scientific discoveries drive economic growth in Brooklyn, where many of our key businesses are in healthcare and education.

PELL GRANTS

The Brooklyn Chamber has great enthusiasm for robust public investment and innovation in the education of America's children – our future workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. The Pell Grant program has been an integral part of federal investment



in the nation's higher education system since its inception. Pell Grants help low and moderate-income students pursue an education and are a source of opportunity, economic mobility and a path to the middle class. The vast majority of recipients come from families making \$40,000 or less each year.

The Brooklyn Chamber urges Congress to continue to invest in the education of American students. We also encourage Congress to continue indexing the grants to keep up with inflation and retain their purchasing power. Furthermore, we support the bipartisan proposals that would expand Pell Grant eligibility to short-term training programs and repeal the current prohibition of ex-offenders from receiving these grants. These two efforts would enhance opportunities for individuals to get the training needed for the modern workforce. The Brooklyn Chamber hopes to maintain access to higher education for many people who otherwise might not find it affordable.

RESEARCH FUNDS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Brooklyn is a college town, home to several institutions of higher learning, both public and private. The funding of scientific research is critical to our nation's ability to innovate, compete, and grow our economy. Basic scientific research generates innovation and discovery that lead to new technologies, products, and industries. Full federal funding of federal research programs at agencies such as NIH, NSF, NASA and the Department of Energy are critical to our goals of making new scientific discoveries; educating and developing a competitive workforce and competing successfully in the new global economy.

In addition to innovation and discovery, our future is also dependent on the development of a workforce that can fully compete in this global economy. This workforce must be educated in the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math. We urge Congress to ensure that the research agencies receive robust funding by completing the FY 2020 appropriations process.



**ATTRACTING TOP INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
TO THE UNITED STATES**

In recent years, unfortunately, there has been a dramatic increase in the number and length of visa and immigration processing delays, placing significant obstacles in the path of international students and researchers. The result of these barriers is that many talented international students are choosing to study in countries outside the United States, which both weakens our higher education system and threatens America's long-term economic growth.

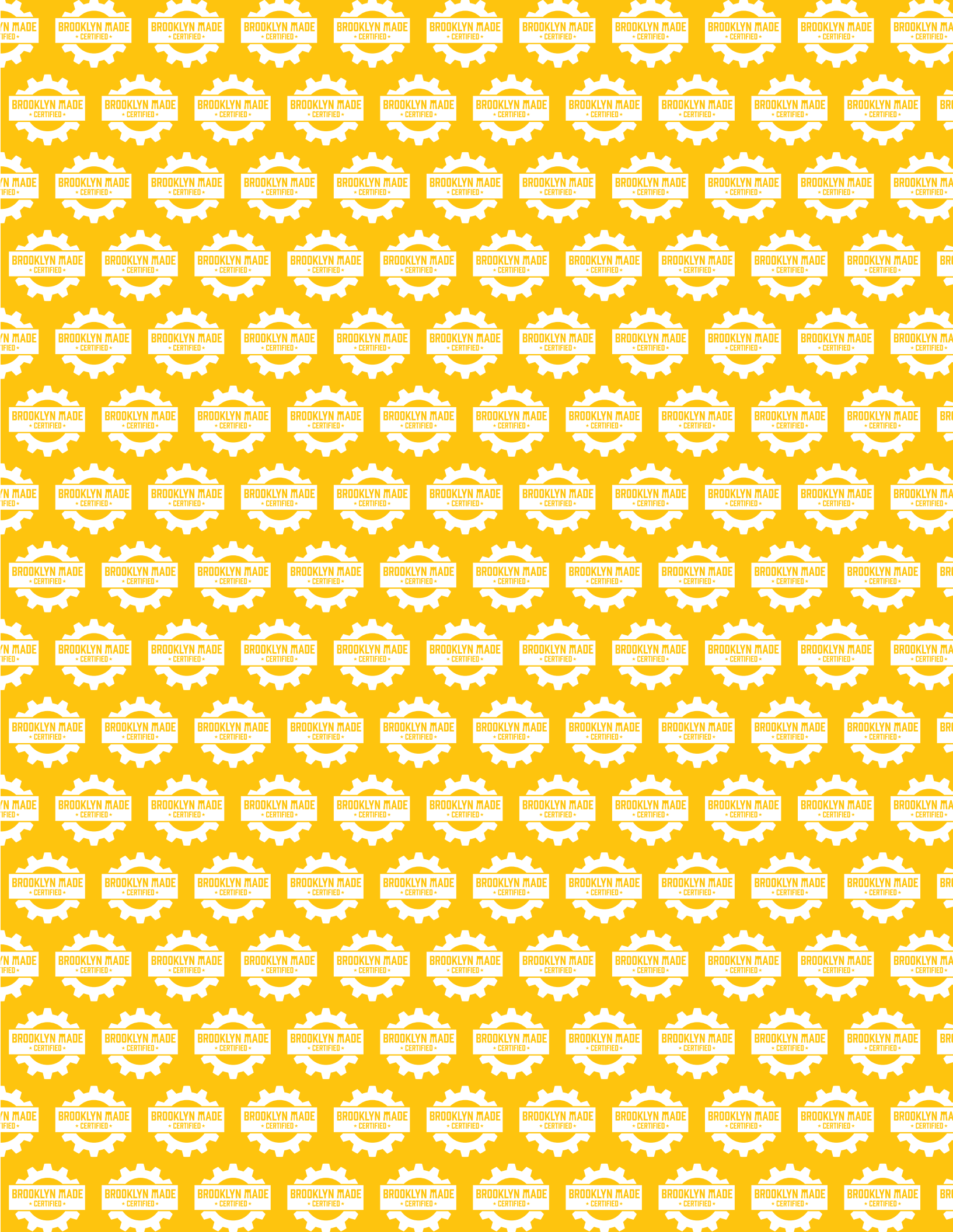
New York State and Brooklyn derive significant benefits from the presence of top international students in classrooms, laboratories and in new businesses. Being able to attract top students from around the world bolsters research and discovery, and international students generate an estimated \$5 billion in economic activity.

TAXES

The Brooklyn Chamber supports efforts to simplify the tax code and encourage sustainable business development. However, most of our businesses do not feel they have benefitted from the tax bill passed by Congress and signed into law in December 2017. There is more work to be done to maximize the benefits for Main Street and the Brooklyn Chamber encourages Congress to pass legislation to make small business tax cuts permanent. Important to support at this time is the Craft Beverage Modernization Act, which would reduce tax rates on beer and distilled spirits and increase the amount of small wine producer tax credits. If passed this will be of substantial benefit to our local breweries, distilleries and wineries. Additionally, the Brooklyn Chamber supports repealing the limitation on the state and local tax deduction cap.



THE BROOKLYN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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NEWTOWN CREEK
GROUP



BROOKLYN NIGHT BUSINESSES

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AMPLE HILLS

BAKED IN BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN BANGERS

BROOKLYN CRAFT

BROOKLYN SELTZER BOYS

BROOKLYN WINERY

CAFÉ GRUMPY

CONEY ISLAND BREWERY

DAMASCUS BAKERY

FINE & RAW CHOCOLATE

FRUIT IQ

GILLIES COFFEE

GRADY'S COLD BREW

JUNIOR'S

LIONI'S

LUDA'S DUMPLINGS

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