

# Free Enterprise & Economic Freedom

## Discussion Guide

### Let's review

*At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.*

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so listen and be prepared to hear a different point of view. Remember, you do not need to share your political affiliation; this is a discussion and exchange of ideas, not politics.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

**The "Table-it" Rule:** If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

### Let's begin

*Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief.*

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

### Let's discuss

*Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.*

- In your opinion, what is the priority in regards to business growth and entrepreneurship?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- What should be the role of government in our economy? Where do government, business, and individuals intersect? Who are the key stakeholders in our local economy?
- Are businesses thriving in your community? Is it easy to establish and grow an enterprise?
- What is the impact of government rules, regulations, fees on entrepreneurship and business growth in our area? What are the costs to the government and to the businesses?
- Are there some changes that you think are necessary around you? Is there a sense of urgency, or long-term systemic changes that need to happen?

# Let's act

## Engage Locally

- *Learn more:*
  - **Research your elected representatives' positions** and their visions for how to tackle the challenges facing Americans at large and your community specifically.
    - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in the Census in your community.
    - You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
  - **Explore the impact of free enterprise and economic freedom in your community.**
    - **Get to know local business owners or entrepreneurs** in your community. Consider asking them about the government regulations that may affect their businesses. Try searching the words "*small business directory*" + [your state or municipality].
    - **Find your local chamber of commerce.** A Chamber of Commerce is an association that promotes the interests of the business community. You can find your local Chamber of Commerce [here](#).
    - **Search your municipality's website** for information pertaining to taxes, business rules and regulations, and economic development initiatives.
      - Search departments, agencies, and programs related to businesses, consumers, and taxes on your municipality's website. These options are likely available in a dropdown menu. Alternatively, you can try using search words such as "*economic growth*," "*business regulations*," or "*community development*" in the search bar.
- *Reach out:*
  - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
  - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
  - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
  - It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).

## Post A Recap / Dive Deeper:

- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. Designate who will post a meeting recap.
- Decide your next meeting topic. Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? This brief is part of multiple Conversation Series:

- The Foundational 5. Other briefs in the series include:
  - [Poverty](#) and [Fiscal Responsibility](#)
- 5 That Impact Business. Other briefs in the series include:
  - [Economic Growth](#), [Government Regulation](#), and [Creating Career Pathways](#)
- Dive Deeper into this area. If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness.