May 4, 2016

An Open Letter to the Presidential Candidates:

The technology sector is eager to see robust engagement on, and ultimately support for, the issues that matter most to our nation.

This election season is a reminder that the pace of change has accelerated. Many Americans feel unprepared for the present, let alone the future. Thus, a central challenge of our time must be leveraging our strengths to expand opportunities and better prepare more citizens for the opportunities ahead.

The technology sector stands ready to help. We know there is much to do, and much to build upon. America remains a beacon for the best and brightest around the world – those who want to study, work, innovate, and live here to contribute their talents to the success of our enterprises and our national endeavors.

Time and again, collaboration between innovative businesses and inspirational national leaders has overcome insurmountable odds, from enabling democracy, to combatting disease and hunger, to going to the moon and beyond.

The technology sector consists of innovative industries that transform our daily lives and propel our economic growth both at home and abroad. Our sector accounts for approximately seven percent of America's gross domestic product (GDP), and in 2015 alone, we added nearly 200,000 net jobs and now employ more than 6.7 million people across the country. We urge the next President to work with our sector to advance an agenda that: (1) ensures Americans possess the skills and talents needed for 21st century success; (2) fosters a business climate that rewards risk and promotes innovation; (3) encourages a fair and open global market for goods and services; and (4) maintains cutting-edge U.S. infrastructure that supports entrepreneurs.

Our nation's technological strength is the product of investment of human resources, ingenuity, and capital in advancing progress for all. As representatives of America's most innovative sector, we believe firmly that our greatest breakthroughs lie ahead. We respectfully propose the following policy recommendations, and offer our time, energy, and creativity in support of America's future.

Sincerely,

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Linda Moore
President and CEO
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Technology Sector Presidential Platform

Strengthen the Skills of America's Workforce

Develop the Science and Technology Workforce: Invest in effective education and research programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), computer science, and career and technical education to bolster the middle class, enhance our diversity and inclusiveness, and develop the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and workers to advance America's global leadership and success.

Welcome High-Skilled Immigrants: Improve the ability of companies operating in the United States to recruit and retain highly educated foreign graduates and professionals to meet hiring needs and supplement our talented U.S. workforce.

Create Jobs and Grow the Economy

Pursue an Active Trade Agenda: Open fast-growing markets around the world in order to continue creating jobs, promoting innovation, and fostering growth. Advance ambitious initiatives to reduce barriers to trade in digital and other goods and services, including obtaining the congressional authorization of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. Guarantee data can flow across borders to enable new technology offerings like cloud computing and data analytics.

Update and Simplify the Tax Code: Support polices to modernize our currently outdated, uncompetitive tax code, which continues to put American interests at a disadvantage while much of the rest of the world takes action. Future reforms should promote investment and job creation in the United States; recognize the global nature of our industries; and, include competitive rates, a transition to a territorial system, and strong incentives for innovation, including for research and development.

Promote Effective and Balanced Intellectual Property Protections: Support effective protection of all major forms of intellectual property. Advocate for the advancement of balanced policies that provide effective patent protections, while also reducing the burden of excessive litigation and encouraging further reforms to foster innovation, promote the issuance of quality patents, and prevent the waste and abuse of public and private resources. Advance policies to protect U.S. trade secrets at home and abroad. Preserve the carefully crafted balances that exist in our copyright laws, which create the flexibility necessary for innovation and creativity.

Support the Sharing Economy: Ensure the technology-enabled sharing economy or on-demand platforms are allowed to compete and grow in an open market. Advance flexible laws and regulations that foster new innovations and promote competition and growth. Discourage the use of legal and regulatory mechanisms to protect incumbents and keep new entrants from providing innovative services that consumers demand.

Foster Trusted Networks

Strengthen Cybersecurity: Leverage best practices that have proven effective in advancing cybersecurity and encourage other governments to do the same. For example, enable enhanced real-time, cybersecurity threat information sharing; focus on cybersecurity risk management; allow for flexible approaches to improving cybersecurity; advance public-private partnerships; emphasize training, education, and awareness to reduce human error; adopt voluntary, consensus-driven standards with appropriate privacy protections for users; and, recognize the importance of encryption as a critical security tool.

Enhance Data Privacy: Advance policies that protect privacy while fostering innovation and growth and ensuring the free flow of data across borders. Promote global consumer trust in digital goods and services by encouraging policies that narrowly target government access to user data, while ensuring law enforcement and other agencies have the appropriate information needed to protect our safety and security.

Propel Innovation

Encourage Policies that Protect Expression and Creativity Online: Support robust freedom of expression on the open Internet and promote policies that prevent censorship by ensuring intermediaries are not unreasonably liable for third-party speech. Advance global policies that promote innovation and new cross-border services by ensuring clear and fairly balanced intermediary liability protections that enable platforms to host third-party content.

Facilitate Access to Spectrum: Adopt policies that pave the way for high-speed, next-generation broadband deployment and competition on the Internet and for Internet services. Incentivize federal entities to reassess whether there are more efficient alternatives to meet the needs of their spectrum users and continue to make more spectrum – licensed and unlicensed – available for broadband and higher-value commercial use.

Develop an Internet of Things (IoT) Strategy: Promote policies to encourage innovation, competition, and private investment that are essential elements for IoT technologies to thrive. Such policies include the: promotion of interoperable consensus-based global standards; investment in robust communications and broadband networks; incorporation of appropriate cybersecurity and privacy protections; advancement of technology-neutral solutions and avoidance of technology mandates; and, active use of public-private partnerships to leverage private sector experience and expertise.

Promote New Technology in the Government

Welcome Public Sector Innovation: Streamline procurement policies so they encourage technology companies to participate in the federal market. Adopt policies that accelerate, not hinder, innovation and allow the government to keep pace with the technology being developed and deployed in the private sector, including the use of digital technologies to modernize government legacy systems. Facilitate the recruitment and retention of skilled technical personnel in order to increase the effective adoption and deployment of innovative technologies in the public sector.