

## Sample Letter to Federal Representatives

“Dear Senator or Representative \_\_\_:

I (We) encourage you to join the bipartisan Congressional Cooperative Business Caucus. Cooperatives, or co-ops for short, are important to the economy and a proven business model used to create and sustain jobs that provide valuable products and services throughout many sectors in our economy. Cooperatives also develop and sustain emerging democracies and civil societies around the globe.

This caucus is important because it creates a venue toward better informing our elected officials on the **important role that cooperatives play in the development of our national and international economy**. The use of the cooperative business model can complement other business models in our economy and be viewed as a viable market solution and business option toward solving a number of today's public policy challenges. A cooperative's unique structure and characteristics lend itself to many distinct business and regulatory hurdles. These need to be more fully understood so that policies can be supported and the model is promoted to ensure that they flourish.

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united by seven principles to voluntarily meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. Businesses operating under a cooperative form utilize a model through which those using the entity's goods or services are actively involved in the governance of the organization and whose profits belong collectively to them.

Cooperatives exist worldwide and inject \$3 trillion into the U.S. economy every year. They create millions of jobs; can be found in virtually every sector of the U.S. economy; and offer solutions to meet challenging public policy needs —from affordable housing, to quality sourced food, greater access to electricity, banking and credit needs, and for early childhood learning. They spur economic growth in underserved rural and urban America; empower individuals, families and communities to better their lives; and ensure that people have access to high-quality goods and services at competitive prices and costs.

Despite their position in the American economy, there remain substantial awareness challenges among the general public and the elected leaders that represent them on **what a co-op looks like, who are co-ops, where are co-ops, and why do people choose them**.

The caucus will facilitate briefings to promote greater awareness and understanding of these issues. The caucus will also be a forum for members to share best practices

and work to improve the effectiveness of policy to benefit and promote the cooperative business model nationally and internationally.

I encourage you to join the Congressional Cooperative Business Caucus and have your office contact the officers of co-chairs Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) or Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI) and tell them you want to become a member.