November 15, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leaders McConnell, Reid, and Pelosi,

We write to express our support for the *Empowering Employees through Stock Ownership Act (EESO)* and ask you to support its inclusion in any final legislative vehicle Congress plans to pass before the end of 2016. This bipartisan initiative, led by Senators Heller and Warner in the Senate and Representatives Paulsen and Crowley in the House, addresses a significant problem facing many private company employees and broader American entrepreneurship – the inability for many employees to own stock in their companies.

This is a serious problem not only for employees, who miss out on the opportunity of employee-ownership, but also the wider American startup community. Employee ownership is a key driver of innovation. It gives employees the opportunity to own a stake in the company they help build and it makes it possible for entrepreneurs across the country to invest in the next great medical breakthrough or technological advance.

Under current law, employees are often required to pay taxes on the value of their stock *long before* they are able to realize any economic value from those shares. This is due to the fact that, unlike public company employees who are able to sell shares in the public markets to pay their tax liability, private company employees generally do not have the ability to sell their shares since no public market exists. As a result, private company employees who cannot cover the cost of taxes may allow their stock options to expire and lose a significant component of their compensation. By allowing eligible employees to defer the taxes associated with exercising their stock options for up to 7 years, the EESO Act solves this problem and would provide an immediate boost to employees across America and our broader startup economy.

We commend the House for passing H.R. 5719 with strong bipartisan support and the Senate Finance Committee for its unanimous vote to pass a bill that included the Senate version, S. 3152. As Congress takes up legislation to fund the government into next year, we urge inclusion of the EESO Act to fuel innovation and help grow employee ownership.

Sincerely,

Palantir Technologies
www.palantir.com

Meetup
www.meetup.com

Avalara Inc.
www.avalara.com

AppNexus Inc.
www.appnexus.com

Zenefits
www.zenefits.com

Sonos
www.sonos.com

Return Path
www.returnpath.com

NASDAQ Private Market
www.nasdaqprivatemarket.com

Acquia Inc.
www.acquia.com

Addepar
www.addepar.com

Sailpoint Technologies Inc.
www.sailpoint.com

Casper
www.casper.com

Betterment
www.betterment.com

Squarespace
www.squarespace.com

Kabbage Inc.
www.kabbage.com

Engine
www.engine.is

TechNet: The Voice of the Innovation Economy
www.technet.org

KC Tech Council
www.kctechcouncil.com

Gusto!
www.gusto.com

Warby Parker
www.warbyparker.com

Artsy
www.artsy.net

Bonobos
www.bonobos.com

Body Labs
www.bodylabs.com

NewsCred
www.newscred.com

23andMe
www.23andme.com

ServiceChannel
www.servicechannel.info

Reorg Research
www.reorg-research.com

ShopKeep
www.shopkeep.com

Canary Connect, Inc.
www.canary.is

Bark & Co.
www.bark.co

GitHub Inc.
www.github.com

DemystData
www.demyst.com

Breather Products, Inc.
www.breather.com

Daily Muse, Inc.
www.themuse.com

Artiman Ventures
www.artiman.com

Carbonite, Inc.
www.carbonite.com

Fuze, Inc.
www.fuze.com

Birchbox
www.birchbox.com

Battery Ventures
www.battery.com

Foursquare Labs, Inc.
www.foursquare.com

Knewton
www.knewton.com

Bessemer Venture Partners
www.bvp.com

YipitData
www.yipitdata.com

Globespan Capital Partners
www.globespancapital.com

AltSchool
www.altschool.com

Wealthfront Inc.
www.wealthfront.com

Virtkick, Inc.
www.virtkick.com

GeekGirlWeb, LLC
www.geekgirlweb.com

Red & Blue Ventures
www.redandblue.vc

SV Angel
www.svangel.com

Hangar
www.hangar.is

Garmentory
www.garmentory.com

Reemo
www.getreemo.com

hobbyDB
www.hobbydb.com

Starry, Inc.
www.starry.com

Neighborland
www.neighborland.org

GRO Industries, Inc,
(no website)

Seed Here LLC
www.seedherestudio.com

Sandberg Tech of North Dakota
www.sandbergtech.com

Help Scout
www.helpscout.net

Goalbook
www.goalbookapp.com

Pick1
www.pick1.com

60secondz
www.60secondz.com

Filament
www.filament.com

Wefunder
www.wefunder.com

Homebrew
www.homebrew.co

Nasper Ventures
www.naspers.com/ventures

First Round Capital
www.firstround.com

FactorTrust, Inc.
www.factortrust.com

2nd.MD
www.2nd.md

Center of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development
www.ceedthefuture.com

FirstMark Capital
www.firstmarkcap.com

Innovation State
www.innovationstate.org

Automattic
www.automattic.com

Medici.md
www.medici.md

Global Accelerator Network
www.gan.co

Kansas City Startup Foundation
www.kcstartupfoundation.org

Equityzen Inc.
www.equityzen.com

SportsPhotos.com, Inc
www.sportsphotos.com

Medium
www.medium.com

Foot Cardigan
www.footcardigan.com

Zaarly
www.zaarly.com

Able Lending
www.ablelending.com

CrowdCheck Inc.
www.crowdcheck.com