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From the Desk of the CEO

Dear CALED Members and Colleagues,



As we mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I am writing to thank you for the role you play in creating and advancing economic opportunity for our residents. The preamble to the Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." For many people, the pursuit of happiness is closely tied to the ability to find meaningful work, start a business, support a family, and contribute to the community they call home.

America is often called the land of opportunity because it was founded on the belief that people should be free to pursue happiness and a better life. Beyond being an ideal, creating opportunity is intentional economic development work focused on inspiring entrepreneurs to launch their enterprises, stimulating businesses that become part of a community's fabric, creating good paying jobs that allow residents the ability to provide for themselves and their families, and building an environment where prosperity is attainable for all.

Economic developers are optimists, problem solvers, people connectors, and more. They are often at the forefront of infrastructure development, innovation, research and development, and workforce trends in order to provide the knowledge and assistance businesses need. More importantly, what they do best is thoughtfully implement strategies to help businesses grow – not only in support of business owners, but in the support of the workers they employ and the communities in which they locate, ensuring there are opportunities for those interested in pursuing them.

As we celebrate America's birthday, so too should we celebrate the people who work hard to help others access new possibilities and pursue their passions. It is an honor to lead an association that serves professionals who wake up every morning with the intent to help others access opportunity, to help others access the American Dream.

I hope you join me in wishing our country a happy 250 th birthday and in recommitting ourselves to cultivating an America where all people can dream, innovate, take chances, and truly pursue happiness.

With gratitude and optimism,

Gurbax Sahota *President & Chief Executive Officer*
California Association for Local Economic Development

