

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](http://www.palantir.com)

Meetup  
[www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

Avalara Inc.  
[www.avalara.com](http://www.avalara.com)

AppNexus Inc.  
[www.appnexus.com](http://www.appnexus.com)

Zenefits  
[www.zenefits.com](http://www.zenefits.com)

Sonos  
[www.sonos.com](http://www.sonos.com)

Return Path  
[www.returnpath.com](http://www.returnpath.com)

NASDAQ Private Market  
[www.nasdaqprivatemarket.com](http://www.nasdaqprivatemarket.com)

Acquia Inc.  
[www.acquia.com](http://www.acquia.com)

Addepar  
[www.addepar.com](http://www.addepar.com)

Sailpoint Technologies Inc.  
[www.sailpoint.com](http://www.sailpoint.com)

Casper  
[www.casper.com](http://www.casper.com)

Betterment  
[www.betterment.com](http://www.betterment.com)

Squarespace  
[www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com)

Kabbage Inc.  
[www.kabbage.com](http://www.kabbage.com)

Engine  
[www.engine.is](http://www.engine.is)

TechNet: The Voice of the Innovation Economy  
[www.technet.org](http://www.technet.org)

KC Tech Council  
[www.kctechcouncil.com](http://www.kctechcouncil.com)

Gusto!  
[www.gusto.com](http://www.gusto.com)

Warby Parker  
[www.warbyparker.com](http://www.warbyparker.com)

Artsy  
[www.artsy.net](http://www.artsy.net)

Bonobos  
[www.bonobos.com](http://www.bonobos.com)

Body Labs  
[www.bodylabs.com](http://www.bodylabs.com)

NewsCred  
[www.newscred.com](http://www.newscred.com)

23andMe  
[www.23andme.com](http://www.23andme.com)

ServiceChannel  
[www.servicechannel.info](http://www.servicechannel.info)

Reorg Research  
[www.reorg-research.com](http://www.reorg-research.com)

ShopKeep  
[www.shopkeep.com](http://www.shopkeep.com)

Canary Connect, Inc.  
[www.canary.is](http://www.canary.is)

Bark & Co.  
[www.bark.co](http://www.bark.co)

GitHub Inc.

[www.github.com](http://www.github.com)

DemystData

[www.demyst.com](http://www.demyst.com)

Breather Products, Inc.

[www.breather.com](http://www.breather.com)

Daily Muse, Inc.

[www.themuse.com](http://www.themuse.com)

Artiman Ventures

[www.artiman.com](http://www.artiman.com)

Carbonite, Inc.

[www.carbonite.com](http://www.carbonite.com)

Fuze, Inc.

[www.fuze.com](http://www.fuze.com)

Birchbox

[www.birchbox.com](http://www.birchbox.com)

Battery Ventures

[www.battery.com](http://www.battery.com)

Foursquare Labs, Inc.

[www.foursquare.com](http://www.foursquare.com)

Knewton

[www.knewton.com](http://www.knewton.com)

Bessemer Venture Partners

[www.bvp.com](http://www.bvp.com)

YipitData

[www.yipitdata.com](http://www.yipitdata.com)

Globespan Capital Partners

[www.globespancapital.com](http://www.globespancapital.com)

AltSchool

[www.altschool.com](http://www.altschool.com)

Wealthfront Inc.

[www.wealthfront.com](http://www.wealthfront.com)

Virtkick, Inc.

[www.virtkick.com](http://www.virtkick.com)

GeekGirlWeb, LLC

[www.geekgirlweb.com](http://www.geekgirlweb.com)

Red & Blue Ventures

[www.redandblue.vc](http://www.redandblue.vc)

SV Angel

[www.svangel.com](http://www.svangel.com)

Hangar

[www.hangar.is](http://www.hangar.is)

Garmentory

[www.garmentory.com](http://www.garmentory.com)

Reemo

[www.getreemo.com](http://www.getreemo.com)

hobbyDB

[www.hobbydb.com](http://www.hobbydb.com)

Starry, Inc.

[www.starry.com](http://www.starry.com)

Neighborland

[www.neighborland.org](http://www.neighborland.org)

GRO Industries, Inc,

(no website)

Seed Here LLC

[www.seedherestudio.com](http://www.seedherestudio.com)

Sandberg Tech of North Dakota

[www.sandbergtech.com](http://www.sandbergtech.com)

Help Scout

[www.helpscout.net](http://www.helpscout.net)

Goalbook  
[www.goalbookapp.com](http://www.goalbookapp.com)

Pick1  
[www.pick1.com](http://www.pick1.com)

60secondz  
[www.60secondz.com](http://www.60secondz.com)

Filament  
[www.filament.com](http://www.filament.com)

Wefunder  
[www.wefunder.com](http://www.wefunder.com)

Homebrew  
[www.homebrew.co](http://www.homebrew.co)

Nasper Ventures  
[www.naspers.com/ventures](http://www.naspers.com/ventures)

First Round Capital  
[www.firstround.com](http://www.firstround.com)

FactorTrust, Inc.  
[www.factortrust.com](http://www.factortrust.com)

2nd.MD  
[www.2nd.md](http://www.2nd.md)

Center of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development  
[www.ceedthefuture.com](http://www.ceedthefuture.com)

FirstMark Capital  
[www.firstmarkcap.com](http://www.firstmarkcap.com)

Innovation State  
[www.innovationstate.org](http://www.innovationstate.org)

Automattic  
[www.automattic.com](http://www.automattic.com)

Medici.md  
[www.medici.md](http://www.medici.md)

Global Accelerator Network  
[www.gan.co](http://www.gan.co)

Kansas City Startup Foundation  
[www.kcstartupfoundation.org](http://www.kcstartupfoundation.org)

Equityzen Inc.  
[www.equityzen.com](http://www.equityzen.com)

SportsPhotos.com, Inc  
[www.sportsphotos.com](http://www.sportsphotos.com)

Medium  
[www.medium.com](http://www.medium.com)

Foot Cardigan  
[www.footcardigan.com](http://www.footcardigan.com)

Zaarly  
[www.zaarly.com](http://www.zaarly.com)

Able Lending  
[www.ablelending.com](http://www.ablelending.com)

CrowdCheck Inc.  
[www.crowdcheck.com](http://www.crowdcheck.com)