

**Excerpts of Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
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Well, ladies and gentlemen, we made it to a new decade! We are now eight days into the 2020s—and we're still standing...

...2019 was also a very successful year for manufacturers. And if we went back to 2009 and the Great Recession, well, we have come a very long way—from bailouts to bull markets, from shuttered factories to shattered economic records.

So, where do we stand at the beginning of this new decade?

Well, on the political front, there's less than a month until the Iowa caucuses. Less than 10 months to the presidential election.

If the race felt intense before, it's about to get even wilder. If there's one thing I can predict with certainty, it's this: nothing is certain.

The challenger to President Trump could be a vocal socialist. She could be someone who's said that companies like the ones we represent are not "patriotic."

Or, he could be a candidate with a more moderate temperament and more moderate policies—and that could come in the form of a young upstart, an experienced statesman or an accomplished businessman.

And however the primary turns out, the odds are that it will be an even more bruising and contentious general election than 2016. Especially if Russia gets its way.

Impeachment will raise the temperature in Washington and boil over onto the campaign trail.

Whatever the outcome, though, we will have vital work before us—the work of the men and women who make things in America.

We cannot let the process result in partisan paralysis. The first thing on our list will be Senate passage of the USMCA.

By the way, take a moment to marvel at this moment in history. Set aside the good, the bad and the ugly. This really is an astonishing moment.

Just hours after impeaching the President of the United States, the Democratic-controlled House ratified an historic trade agreement negotiated by the Republican administration.

And once the Republican Senate finishes the work of impeachment, it is expected to offer its bipartisan blessing to that trade deal, supported by business and labor.

Whether you signed up for this or not, we are living history.

And how is it possible, amid the messy politics and high-stakes constitutional issues, that we're even talking about a new trade deal, rather than the end of the North American trading relationship?

How? The answer is quite simple... Manufacturers. Us. Our industry, our people, our associations drove the campaign to make it possible.

Two years ago, the conventional wisdom was that NAFTA was dead and that withdrawal of the agreement was imminent. We mobilized to change the narrative.

Then a little more than one year ago, the conventional wisdom was that negotiations were stalled and we should settle for bilateral deals. We said absolutely not and demanded a trilateral deal as the only acceptable outcome.

Then a few months ago, the conventional wisdom was that the deal would never get through Congress. Again, we mobilized and we changed the narrative again—so that it wasn't about politics, but about people, the men and women of manufacturing.

And it worked.

Manufacturers defied conventional wisdom every single time. We set the bar high. We kept the bar high. And we are getting the deal across the finish line.

Sure, we didn't get everything we wanted. But we got close. And above all, we preserved the vital trading relationship that supports 2 million manufacturing jobs in America.

And so, the year that brought trade uncertainty...ended with very promising trade developments—not just on the USMCA, but also a 7-year reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank and a deal with China that includes transformative intellectual property protections.

And throughout the entire year, manufacturers were racking up other victories that didn't make the headlines—from new rules at the SEC, to regulatory certainty at the EPA, and the repeal of onerous taxes on health care, including that ridiculous tax on medical devices.

Not bad for a year in which we were told nothing could get done....

Our members are facing difficult economic headwinds, blowing in from overseas. China remains a critical challenge. The election year brings its own uncertainties.

The latest NAM Manufacturers' Outlook Survey is a glass half full—half empty situation.

Sixty-eight percent of manufacturers said they have a positive outlook. Sounds good, but that's down from the record highs in the 90's of just a year ago. The survey does show stabilization, and since it was in the field before the USMCA deal and the China deal were announced, the numbers will likely look better in the future barring any new developments....

So, that is the world at the start of 2020. Now, we have to look clearly at what's ahead. And it is a challenge that is unlike anything we've ever faced.

The politics of this election will strain our nation. Our institutions will be challenged. Our electoral process will be questioned. Our very economic system could be on the ballot.

We don't have the luxury of saying this isn't our problem. We don't get to sit back and focus on our own checklists and let others deal with these questions. These are defining issues.

Our businesses do not succeed if our economic system is upended. Our system does not function if Americans don't trust their institutions or if they lose faith in the democratic system that's the lynchpin of our society.

We are not called to sit on the sidelines. But we also cannot tarnish ourselves with the dirt of partisan mudslinging.

So what is our role?...

First, our duty is to stand clearly for our values. Just because we've seen more politicians abandon theirs does not mean we abandon ours.

Americans need us to uphold the values that make this nation exceptional—free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty and equal opportunity.

Navigating the next year and beyond will be truly challenging at times. When we're faced with difficult decisions, returning to these four pillars will help guide our way forward.

Are we defending free enterprise?
Are we fostering competitiveness?
Are we upholding individual liberty?
Are we advancing equal opportunity?

If the answer is yes, to every single one of those questions, then we are doing the right thing. We are on the right path. We are doing the work of keeping America exceptional and our industry strong.

Now is not the time to keep quiet about our values. In fact, failing to speak out our values clearly is the riskiest proposition of all.

If we do not define ourselves, we will be defined by others who do so for their own political purposes....

Our country needs a unifying force. And being a unifying force is our second major task in the year ahead....

We must speak and act in ways that bridge differences and forge consensus.

We know we can do it. We did it with the USMCA for goodness' sake.

We built a USMCA majority not by casting stones or denouncing opponents, but by offering a path to "yes" that turned opponents into skeptics and skeptics into supporters.

In our words and actions, then, we should aim to be a healing force....

Our industry, our companies and the larger business community must be part of the solution to the many concerns that keep families awake at night.

If business leaders do not speak to the concerns of the American people in a unifying, meaningful way, then Americans will be more likely to dismiss us as part of the problem. And perhaps rightly so.

So, we can be a political scapegoat. Or we can be the solution.

Third, we have a duty to engage the men and women of our industry in the political process. That means engaging and equipping our members.

We've seen what a difference the voices of manufacturing workers and voters can make in Washington—on tax reform in 2017 and on the USMCA last year in particular.

Of course, in the presidential election, manufacturers cannot, and should not, tell their employees which candidate to support. But we can show them what policies matter, which values are critical. So that they can hold candidates of all political stripes accountable.

Promoting civic engagement and educating voters on manufacturing issues strengthens the democratic foundation of our country.

People who are engaged in the electoral process are more likely to trust the electoral process. Those who participate in democracy are more likely to see its value. This work is vital not just to this election—but to the future of our system at a time when it is being tested.

And taking the long view is our fourth responsibility this year. Presidential elections can feel all-consuming. It's easy to get swept up in the whirlwind and lose sight of the horizon....

Our job is to be in the present, while also building our future.

2020 is the 125th anniversary of the founding of the National Association of Manufacturers. On January 22, 1895, manufacturing leaders gathered in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Oddfellows Hall to form a new association for the advancement of

manufacturing in America. Many of the companies present at the founding are still represented on the NAM Board today.

Their foresight powered our industry's success generation after generation.

It is a reminder that economic upheavals, world wars, social unrest, rapid change, political crises, tragedy and triumph are no match for our industry. In fact, for a century and a quarter, we have led our nation through the best and worst of times.

And so, our vision extends beyond 2020 to what it will take for us to succeed for the next 125 years.

That is exactly the philosophy behind the NAM's Creators Wanted campaign. And we want all of you to be a part of this unique and unprecedented effort.

Creators Wanted is not only part of our workforce strategy, but also the foundation on which the NAM and the industry will build our future for decades to come.

...Now is our chance. Now is our chance to transform the perceptions of our industry and inspire a new generation.

A decade from now, will we look back and say we rose to the challenge? Or will we look around to see that 2.4 million manufacturing jobs went unfilled over a decade?

In 20, 50, 125 years—will America's manufacturers of the future lead the world in innovation, or will they have ceded that mantle to other nations?

It's their future. But it's our choice. Our leadership will determine not only what gets done this year, but also what our country looks like and represents for years to come.

So I invite you: embrace this new decade. Lead boldly. Affirm our values. Be a force for unity. Engage our people. And keep our sights focused firmly on the future.

It is ours to build.

Thank you so much.