

April 13, 2000

Dear Conferees:

We, the undersigned companies and associations, which represents every segment of the United States economy, are writing to express our unified support for the prompt enactment of strong and effective electronic signatures and records legislation.

Now that the conferees have been appointed, we urge you to complete work on this historic legislation and move expeditiously towards final passage. This legislation will provide the legal certainty and national uniformity necessary for consumers and businesses alike to contract electronically for goods and services, to receive related state and federal disclosures online, and to obtain electronic records of their transactions.

Access to computers and the Internet is already significant and is rising in virtually every segment of the population. Consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet to purchase or shop for a variety of goods and services. According to CommerceNet and Nielsen Media Research, as of April 1999, the number of Internet users in North America has now reached 92 million -- 55 million of whom shop online. This legislation is critical to the continued expansion of this sector of the economy.

Electronic media will empower consumers by providing enhanced product information and access to a broader and more competitive commercial marketplace. Moreover, it will make it possible for disclosures, records and other information to be provided faster, more cost effectively, and in a more user-friendly way than with static paper formats.

The Conferees goal should be to provide for the legal equivalence between electronic records and signatures and those that are in paper and ink form. This means providing a uniform, nationwide rule for the enforceability of electronic records and signatures under which consumers and businesses across the country can reliably engage.

Legal equivalence is needed for both contracts and other records. Without legal equivalence for both, consumers and businesses will be unable to realize the full benefits of electronic commerce.

The Conferees should ensure that substantive consumer protections afforded under current law are neither reduced nor expanded solely because required notices and disclosures are provided in electronic form. At the same time the bill should require informed consumer consent. We believe that the final conference bill should strike a balance between the rights and reasonable expectations of consumers and the needs of business.

The increasingly widespread use of the Internet and electronic commerce in general will continue to revolutionize the marketplace only if service providers are able to use the best technology available to remain competitive. The passage of legislation creating a uniform, national rule enabling the use of electronic records and signatures is a necessary next step in ensuring that the United States remains competitive in this new economy.

We urge you to move expeditiously towards final enactment and we look forward to working with you to craft an effective final bill that will help foster the growth of electronic commerce and better serve consumers and businesses.

Sincerely,

America's Community Bankers
American Bankers Association
American Century Investments
American Council of Life Insurers
American Express
American Financial Services Association
American Insurance Association
American Insurance Group
American Land Title Association
Association for Competitive Technology
Bank of America
Bank One Corporation
Business Software Alliance
Charles Schwab & Co.
Chase Manhattan Bank
Chubb Group of Insurance Companies
Cigna Corporation
Citigroup Inc.
Computer & Communications Industry Association
Consumer Bankers Association
Consumer Mortgage Coalition
Credit Suisse First Boston
Creditland
DLJdirect
Dreyfus Corporation
Electronic Financial Services Council
National Business Coalition on E-Commerce and Privacy
National Retail Federation
New York Clearing House Association L.L.C.
PenOp Inc.
PNC Financial Services Group
Principal Financial Group
Prudential
RealNames Corporation
Real Estate Roundtable
Reinsurance Association of America

E-Loan
Fidelity Investments
Financial Services Roundtable
Fireman's Fund Insurance Company
GHR Systems
Household International
Independent Community Bankers of America
Information Technology Association of America
Intuit
Investment Company Institute
Jackson National Life Insurance Company
Lender's Service, Inc.
MassMutual Financial Group
MasterCard International
MBNA America
Mellon Financial Corporation
Merrill Lynch & Co.,
MetLife
Microsoft
Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co.
Mortgage Bankers Association
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
National Association of Realtors
RESPRO
Securities Industry Association
St. Paul Companies, Inc.
Stewart Title
SunTrust Banks, Inc.
U.S. Bancorp
United States Chamber of Commerce
VISA
Wachovia Corporation
Wells Fargo and Co.
Xpede
Zurich Financial Services Group