



## Press Release 報道参考資料

*For Immediate Release*

### **ACCJ President Debbie Howard Tells United States Congress' Committee on Ways and Means: Remain Engaged on Japan Reform**

**September 29, 2005 (Tokyo)** –The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) President Debbie Howard testified before the House Ways and Means Committee yesterday, acknowledging that economic reform in Japan has made progress, but should be accelerated in a number of areas to ensure sustained economic growth and stability.

The Committee hearing on US-Japan economic and trade relations addressed key structural challenges including Japan's aging population and the dismal outlook on its social security system, as well as the mounting public debt currently exceeding 163 percent of the nation's GDP. In her testimony, Howard stated that, Japan must "take decisive, private-sector driven measures to enhance efficiency in its economy overall and to create a new social safety net system able to cope with an older society."

Japan Post privatization and healthcare reform were also a central focus of the hearing. With regard to postal reform, Howard commented that the Committee's "continued engagement will be essential to obtain specific commitments from Japan to ensure equivalent conditions of competition and transparency of the process." She added, "It is essential that healthcare reform incorporate market-based measures that make more efficient use of limited resources and enable innovative companies – including U.S. companies – to provide cost-effective solutions."

Howard commended the Japanese Government on the progress made in the transparency of its policy making processes, and hailed Prime Minister Koizumi's landslide victory as signaling that a consensus has emerged among the Japanese people and its leaders that even more reform is necessary for Japan to meet the challenges of the future. She concluded her remarks by stressing that it is essential that the U.S. Government remain engaged to ensure that reform in Japan stays on track and Japan lives up to its trade commitments.

In closing, Chairman E Clay Shaw Jr. of the Subcommittee on Trade indicated that the Committee intended to follow up on today's hearing and pledged not to let the matter drop.

After the hearing, Howard said, "we were reassured and encouraged that the Committee is so focused on making real progress with Japan on the trade front."

For more details about the hearing, please visit the website below.  
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=443>



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### **About the ACCJ**

The mission of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) is to further the development of commerce between the United States of America and Japan, promote the interests of U.S. companies and members, and improve the international business environment in Japan. Established in 1948 by representatives of 40 American firms, the ACCJ has grown into one of the most influential business organizations in Japan, with close to 3,000 individual members representing more than forty countries and 1,400 companies.

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