



*For Immediate Release*

## **ACCJ Concludes 19<sup>th</sup> Annual “Diet Doorknock” with Japanese Lawmakers, Stressing the Importance of Promoting Long-Term Economic Growth**

**October 30, 2014** – The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) completed its 19<sup>th</sup> annual “Diet Doorknock” today. Over the past three days, almost 60 ACCJ leaders and members, led by ACCJ President Jay Ponazecki, met with approximately 60 legislators and officials including Cabinet members and party leaders.

The aim of this year’s Diet Doorknock has been to engage with senior Japanese government officials as the ACCJ continues to advocate policies and to share global best practices to spur long-term economic growth in Japan and to further Japan’s renewed economic momentum toward the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Consistent with its core advocacy principle to proffer solutions-based recommendations to government officials, this year the ACCJ identified three principal themes that are likely to contribute significantly to fostering further economic growth in Japan over the long-term, specifically:

- Conclusion of TPP negotiations: Japan and the United States need to do what is necessary at this time to take advantage of the historic opportunity to lead in the establishment of the trade architecture and rules in this vibrant region of the world.
- Implementation of labor mobility reforms and womenomics: Japan should establish a system in which companies and individuals can more freely make decisions that enhance productivity; this would include strengthening the ‘safety net’ so that workers can retrain themselves as well as amending the Labor Law to allow for more flexible hiring and dismissals. These changes will not only make it easier for growing companies and new entrants to the economy to hire the staff they need to grow, but they are also a prerequisite to the

participation and advancement of more women in the workplace.

- Promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship in Japan: The Japanese government should encourage innovation and entrepreneurship through a variety of channels, including by reducing administrative fees and hurdles to start-up companies, setting aside procurement budget for new products and services developed by young or start-up companies and effectively utilizing special economic zones to promote new companies and lighten the regulatory burden on them.

Ponazecki said, "With the TPP negotiations in the final stages, this year's Diet Doorknock has been a perfect opportunity to engage with Japanese officials regarding this historic agreement and the substantial economic benefits we believe Japan will derive from its participation. In addition to TPP, we had numerous productive interactions with key officials regarding labor mobility, womenomics and innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as a wide array of industry-specific issues."

The Diet Doorknock is organized by the ACCJ's Government Relations Committee, chaired by Arthur Mitchell, who said, "Over the years, we have built a strong rapport with many within the Japanese government. We are extremely grateful to all the Diet members and officials who took the time to meet with us. We were pleased to have open and candid discussions about policy matters, and welcomed an exchange of opinions on new and exciting recommendations we offered in the hope of spurring long-term growth in the Japanese economy. The ACCJ participants in the Diet Doorknock are leaders in their industries, bringing with them not only vital industry-specific knowledge, but also a true desire to contribute to a thriving Japanese economy and a global perspective on many issues of import to business and government alike."

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### About ACCJ

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) was established in 1948 by representatives of 40 American companies and has grown into one of the most influential business organizations in Japan. Consisting mainly of executives from American companies, currently the ACCJ has members representing 1,000



companies with offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. Working closely with the governments of the United States and Japan, business organizations, and others, the ACCJ promotes activities that help achieve its mission of further developing commerce between the United States and Japan, promoting the interests of U.S. companies and members, and improving the international business environment in Japan. The ACCJ's more than 60 committees represent a variety of industries and make policy recommendations through advocacy tools such as viewpoints, public comments and white papers. The ACCJ holds approximately 500 events and seminars a year, many of which focus on government policy and economic trends. The ACCJ is also committed to promoting charitable events and CSR activities.

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