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A belated happy new year to everyone, and a big thank you for your continued support of the Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC. It has been a great honor and privilege to serve as president of this organization over the past year.

My sixteen fellow board members and I just closed out another year of tremendous accomplishment, and I sincerely hope you had the chance to participate in at least one of our events. Taking this opportunity, please join me in extending a special thanks to Ms. Kogure, who just finished a three-year-term as a board member. She was in charge of JCAW's seminars and did an amazing job selecting interesting topics and emceeding our events.

Whether you're ready for it or not, Washington has entered a presidential election year. During past election cycles, my colleagues in Japan would ask me questions like, "Who's going to win?" to which I would respond, "I don't know. I'm just a businessman. You're asking the wrong guy." Then, politics was politics and business was business, so I could get away with a nonchalant answer. Today, the US government has advanced many policies with the potential to directly impact our businesses, be it import duties, manufacturing and infrastructure subsidies, and/or export and investment control measures, to name just a few.

For this reason, and others, our head offices are paying more attention to and relying even more heavily on the intelligence gathering, advocacy, and government affairs functions that we undertake in our Washington, DC, offices. If I may say so, what we do in Washington has become more relevant than ever. My hope is that we can stand up to this challenge, and, as I mentioned last year, make the JCAW one of the key platforms in bringing the Washington ecosystem together. Needless to say, networking and collaboration among the business sector, media, Embassy of Japan, US government, think tanks, and other public policy organizations is what makes this town special.

While the JCAW is primarily a business-oriented organization, as many of you know, there is a social/personal/fun side of JCAW as well. In fact, we organize seminars, Japanese movie showings, and sporting events, and offer member networking opportunities. We also have board members dedicated to public relations, community relations, and Japanese language education support.

All seventeen members of the board will be working diligently through the year to make JCAW a better organization. We await your active participation, and hope 2024 is a healthy and prosperous year for everyone.

Sincerely,

Randy Yoshimura
President, JCAW