



This FANmail is brought to you by: Lew Wiens

*"Suddenly, franchising was the growth future of Marriott and franchisees owning the real estate was a safe growth strategy"*

-- Lewis "Lew" Wiens, C.H.A., Chairman and CEO, True North Hotel Group, Inc.

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### **Tax Reform is Here: Pledge to Reinvest and Grow your Business**

Congress recently passed an historic tax overhaul, lowering the corporate, pass-through, and individual tax rates. To demonstrate the positive impacts of the tax reform bill, IFA and the Franchise Action Network are compiling names of franchise brands and individual owners around the country who have pledged to reinvest and grow their businesses because of the beneficial changes to the tax code.

Sign our pledge to signal your intention to utilize the sweeping changes to the tax code and reinvest in America's economic future!

[Sign The Pledge](#)

Text **"TAXES"** to 52886 to pledge to invest in our employees, businesses and local communities after the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act!*

### **Are you a Florida FAN? Join us in Tampa on Jan. 26!**

Join the IFA for a [free lunch event](#) designed specifically to help franchisees and franchisor executives navigate and understand the regulatory climate from Washington, D.C. down to Tallahassee.

Topics including joint employer, overtime, and data security will be covered with franchise business priorities in mind. This event will feature speakers including Tra Williams, FAN Florida Co-Captain, Joe Kefauver, Managing Partner at Align Public Affairs, and Justin Klein, a leading franchise attorney from Marks & Klein. The event will also include a free buffet lunch, and dedicated time for networking.

Don't miss out! This event takes place at the Tampa Marriott Westshore, on January 26, 2018 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

**Take Action to Support Our Nation's Heroes**

Urge your elected officials to [support H.R. 4473](#), the Veteran Entrepreneurs Act! The technical and leadership skills of veterans are a natural fit for the franchise industry and this sound investment would benefit not only our heroes, but the economy at large.

## [TAKE ACTION NOW!](#)

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### **Department of Labor Issued Proposed Rules on Small Business Health Plans**

On Jan. 4, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued a proposed rule on small business health plans, traditionally known as association health plans. The proposed rule would allow small franchise business owners to join together through associations, and other organizations to buy affordable health insurance. Following the White House Executive Order in October that IFA leaders attended in support, the DOL will now take the next steps needed to begin advancing more affordable health care options through small business health plans. The Notice of Proposed Rule-making was published on Jan. 5 and will trigger a 60-day notice and comment period. IFA will submit comments on behalf of the franchise business community.

Read IFA's full statement [here](#).

### **FASTSIGNS International CEO Discusses Tax Reform Law on Fox Business**

FASTSIGNS International CEO, Catherine Monson, CFE, discussed the benefits of the new tax reform on franchise businesses in an [exclusive interview](#) on FOX Business Network's *Varney and Co.* Monson said that new tax code would allow franchise business owners to reinvest and grow their business. Furthermore, it would stimulate job growth, and higher wages.



Watch the full interview [here](#).

### **IFA Recognizes Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fl.) with Franchise Small Business Award**



Representatives from IFA and several franchise brands recognized Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fl.) this week for her support in protecting the franchise business model. IFA President and CEO, Robert Cresanti, presented her with the Franchise Small Business award in appreciation of her bipartisan efforts to support small business owners both locally and nationwide.

### Former CEO of CKE Restaurants Pens Wall Street Journal Op-Ed

Former CEO of CKE Restaurants, Andy Puzder, penned an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* in defense of the recent *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* that was signed into law on December 22, 2017. The piece discusses general wage stagnation and how the fluctuating economy impacts wages in the service industries. Puzder advocates for a different perspective on minimum wage, saying competition will drive higher wages rather than government mandates. "Both the competition for employees and the associated wage increases will continue—if government stays out of the way. Wage growth doesn't come from government mandates. It comes from policies that get the economy moving," added Puzder.



Read the full op-ed [here](#).

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### In the News

[Trump's ObamaCare Lifeboat](#), *WSJ*

[Supreme Court Won't Review DirecTV Joint Employer Case](#), *BGOV*

[The Trump administration just changed its overtime guidance — and business cheers](#), *The Washington Post*

[Rep Wants to Clarify That Franchisors Aren't Joint Employers in Pa.](#), *The Legal Intelligencer*

[Labor Market Regulation](#), *American Action Forum*

[The Merciless Death of Obama's Workforce Legacy](#), *Inside Sources*

Tweets of the Week:

[A year in review. IFA's achievements in 2017.](#)

[President of the American Action Forum recognizes that Congress should act on a permanent solution to labor issues including the #jointemployer standard @AAF](#)

[.@RepToddStephens understands how the joint employer issue can negatively impact franchise businesses @thelegalintel](#)

[IFA applauds @USDOL for commitment to providing Americans with better, more affordable healthcare coverage.](#)

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## Featured FAN: Lewis "Lew" Wiens



Lewis H. (Lew) Wiens, C.H.A., is a highly respected hotel owner, manager and developer known throughout the industry for his extensive experience, consistency and integrity.

Lew got his first taste of development with Homes by Henry, Inc., a single-family and light commercial construction and sub-division development company, where he served as President from 1973 to 1976. He then became general property manager for Robert E. Esrey Company, a forerunner of Cohen-Esrey Real Estate Services, Inc., in 1976, directing the operation of a dozen large apartment projects. In 1977, he entered the plastics business and a year later purchased Aero Plastics, a plastics manufacturer with two plants in Kansas City. He operated this company until co-founding RHW Companies, a hotel firm, in 1983.

Lew became Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of RHW, which was comprised of two companies, RHW Management, Inc., and RHW Construction, Inc. Lew directed the property management side along with development, market analysis and site selection. RHW Companies was a pioneer in the development of Residence Inn, opening the sixteenth Residence Inn – and the brand's fifth franchise property – in 1984. Lew became very involved with the Residence Inn development company and was a founding member of the Owner's Association when it was formed. He was the incoming President of The Residence Inn Association, the franchise owner's group, when the brand was acquired by Marriott in 1987. Lew's steady leadership during this often challenging transition led to strong Marriott relationships that continue today.

In 1995, Lew founded Henry Hotels, Inc., to concentrate on development opportunities, and subsequently entered into a joint venture in 1998 with Fishkill, N.Y.-based developer and fellow Residence Inn pioneer Michael Dubroff, owner of Inn Alpha Management Corporation, to form True North Hotel Group, L.L.C. The affiliated group maintained a portfolio of 18-20 hotels, developing and opening 11 hotels until Mike's retirement in 2002. Lew then teamed with Richard Merkel to reorganize the company under one umbrella, and True North Hotel Group, Inc., was born. Lew currently serves as Chairman and CEO of True North Hotel Group, Inc., which is based in Overland Park, KS and operates 25 multi-brand hotels in 11 states with six hotels under development.

A business school graduate of the University of Kansas, Lew is a Vietnam veteran who served a second part-time career as a supply officer in the Naval Reserves for 21 years including six years in a Naval Construction Battalion (SEABEES). With 4 ½ years of active duty, he served as the Supply Officer of the U.S.S. Walker out of Pearl Harbor and later was assigned as a simultaneous staff member of CINCLANTFLT and COMSERVLANT in Norfolk. He is a licensed real estate broker in Kansas, and holds a Certified Hotel Administrator (C.H.A.) designation from the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Lew is past President of The Residence Inn by Marriott Association and a member of the Marriott Spring Hill Suites Franchise Advisory Council, for which he also served as President for over a decade. He has dedicated many years of civic duty to his community, serving as zoning board Chairman, Johnson County Planning Commission member, Board Member of an intercity not-for-profit organization, Board Member of Wounded Warriors Family Support, and as an active volunteer/coach with several youth programs.

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## Franchising Facts - Did You Know?

Approximately, one in every twelve businesses in the United States is a franchise business.

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