

# CRST's John Smith & Family Enterprise USA's Pat Soldano Advocate for National Family Business Spotlight at Cornell Event

*Cornell's John and Dyan Smith Family Business Initiative Holds 'Families in Business Conference' Featuring Key Family Business Academics, Experts*

ITHACA, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, November 21, 2023 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- John Smith,

Chairman, CRST, The Transportation

Solution, Inc., and Family Enterprise USA President Pat Soldano were featured speakers at the recent "Families in Business Conference," where the discussion spotlighted the importance of having a [strong voice for family businesses](#) in our nation's capital.

The event held here was the ninth organized by Cornell University's Smith Family Business Initiative. The initiative is part of the university's S.C Johnson Graduate School of Management. The two-day event was held at The Statler Hotel & Conference Center. Smith received his MBA from Cornell in 1974.

Smith, also Secretary of the 45,000-member strong American Trucking Associations, and Soldano spoke on the massive and often hidden contribution America's family businesses make to the U.S. economy, and how few in Congress understand this contribution.

Today, CRST, a family-owned business, has annual revenue of \$2 billion, with lines of business in trucking, logistics, property development, insurance, security, and family office. Founded in 1955, CRST is today one of the nation's largest privately held transportation and logistics companies.

Cornell University's Daniel Van Der Vliet, The John and Dyan Smith Executive Director Family Business at the S.C Johnson Graduate School of Management, introduced Soldano and Smith, who also chairs Hillcrest Holdings, on the discussion entitled: "The Family Business Congressional Caucus and Amplifying the Voice of Family Enterprise."

During the talk, Soldano detailed the results of Family Enterprise USA's annual research study, which shows America's multi-generational family-owned businesses contributing \$7.7 trillion



annually to the U.S. gross domestic product. Family businesses are the largest private employers in the country, accounting for 83.3 million jobs, or 59 percent of the country's private workforce, the research shows.

The policies affecting the many family businesses, including family-owned trucking companies, can be particularly difficult to navigate, according to Smith.

"Because of the changing tax laws, both federal and state, we're always thinking about how that affects our business and drivers," said Smith. "It's critical our voices are heard loud and clear on Capitol Hill, and the new [Congressional Family Business Caucus](#) is a big first step in getting our messages heard," he said. "It's important that we tell our stories to this new Caucus, so they fully understand the challenges family businesses face right now."

The bipartisan Congressional Family Business Caucus was formed last year with four co-chairs: Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-NY), Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Brad Schneider (D-IL) and Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX). The caucus held three meetings in 2023. Currently, 31 congressional members have signed on to support the caucus.

Cornell's Smith Family Business Initiative was created to bring together faculty, scholars, and practitioners to provide multidisciplinary guidance and expertise to help equip well-established, emerging, and aspiring family businesses with the knowledge and skills essential to navigate the multi-generational dimensions and family influence of these organizations.

"These events like the one here at Cornell University are opportunities to continue to get the family business message heard and to educate audiences on the importance of family businesses to the American story and economy," Soldano told attendees. "There are so many successful family businesses, and they are truly the engine that drives our economy, but there are also many challenges these businesses face," she said. "It's vital that academia, legislators, and the business community understand the need for family businesses to have a [strong voice on Capitol Hill](#)."

Soldano is also President of Policy and Taxation Group, an advocate for family businesses on Capitol Hill and a sister organization of Family Enterprise USA. For more information on the two conferences go to [www.familyenterpriseusa.com](http://www.familyenterpriseusa.com)

## About Family Enterprise USA

Family Enterprise USA promotes generationally owned family business creation, growth, viability, and sustainability by advocating for family businesses and their lifetime of savings with Congress in Washington DC. Since 2007, Family Enterprise USA has represented and celebrated all sizes, professions, and industries of family-owned enterprises and multi-generational employers. It is a bi-partisan 501.c3 organization. [www.familyenterpriseusa.com](http://www.familyenterpriseusa.com)

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