

MARKUP OF: H. RES. 1298, “OF INQUIRY
DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
TO TRANSMIT CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RELATING TO
THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
TREASURY IN THE PAYCHECK PROTECTION
PROGRAM OF THE SMALL BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION.”; H.R. 8844, “STEP IMPROVE-
MENT ACT OF 2022”

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

UNITED STATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 21, 2022



Small Business Committee Document Number 117-068
Available via the GPO Website: www.govinfo.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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MARKUP OF: H. RES. 1298, “OF INQUIRY DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO TRANSMIT CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RELATING TO THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY IN THE PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.”; H.R. 8844, “STEP IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2022”

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:06 a.m., in Room 2360, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Nydia M. Velázquez [Chairwoman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Velázquez, Golden, Crow, Davids, Mfume, Phillips, Newman, Bourdeaux, Carter, Chu, Evans, Houlahan, Andy Kim, Craig, Peters, Luetkemeyer, Williams, Stauber, Meuser, Tenney, Garbarino, Young Kim, Van Duyne, Donalds, Fitzgerald, and Flood.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Good morning. A quorum being present, I call this morning’s meeting of the Committee on Small Business to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 13 and House Rule XI, Clause 2, the Chair may postpone further proceedings today on the question of approving the measure or adopting an amendment on which a recorded vote is ordered.

I would like to begin by noting some important requirements. Let me begin by saying that standing House and Committee rules and practice will continue to apply during hybrid proceedings. All Members are reminded that they are expected to adhere to these standing rules including decorum.

House regulations require Members to be visible through a video connection throughout the proceeding, so please keep your cameras on. Also, remember to remain muted until you are recognized to minimize background noise.

Today, we will be considering two legislative measures. First, we will take up H. Res. 1298, a Resolution of Inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit certain documents to the House relating to the role of the Department of Treasury in the Paycheck Protection Program which was introduced by Ranking Member Luetkemeyer.

We also will be considering H.R. 8844, the STEP Improvement Act of 2022, which was introduced by Representative Evans and co-sponsored by Ms. Kim, Ms. Newman, and Mr. Flood.

During the beginning of the pandemic, we entered into one of the most perilous times for small business owners. With the dangers of COVID-19 to the general public, small businesses had to pivot to align their business practices to the new normal during that period. As small businesses struggled, it was incumbent on the federal government to step up and provide financial support. This Committee took up the call that helped create the Paycheck Protection Program. Nearly \$800 billion in low interest, forgivable loans were issued to keep small firms afloat during the pandemic. Although the program was a tremendous success, congressional oversight of a program of this magnitude is imperative.

Moreover, the Economic Aid Act required the Secretary of the Treasury and the SBA Administrator to testify before the Committee not less than twice per year. Our attempts to have Secretary Yellen testify before the Committee have unfortunately been unsuccessful.

In general, I do not object to the minority's efforts here, especially to determine what policies the Treasury, specifically under former Secretary Mnuchin, could have instituted to ensure that these loans were distributed equitably in the beginning. However, I will note that the Committee continues to conduct rigorous oversight of the Paycheck Protection Program which is why this Resolution of Inquiry is not needed.

For those reasons, I will be recommending that the Committee report H. Res. 1298 to the House without recommendation. The Committee will also consider legislation to reauthorize the SBA State Trade Expansion Program for 4 more years. The STEP Improvement Act reauthorizes this vital small business program and makes improvements to the ground process. This bill is just another example of the work the Committee has done through this Congress to help small business owners and entrepreneurs recover from the pandemic.

I want to reiterate that this measure has bipartisan support and I urge Members to support the bill.

I would to recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Luetkemeyer, for his opening statement.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for calling today's markup.

We have important work to do on behalf of America's small businesses, entrepreneurs, innovators, and startups. This morning's markup will highlight and showcase the work the Committee is doing to enhance small businesses' ability to trade their goods and services on the global stage while also exercising critical important congressional oversight.

As you just stated, this is a very important issue from the standpoint of providing oversight over this agency and the Treasury from the standpoint of the PPP program.

Unfortunately, the Committee arrived at this juncture after following two separate paths. One followed regular order, which allowed Members on both sides of the aisle to discuss and debate reforms of the Small Business Administration's State Trade Expansion Program, also known as STEP, which aims to assist small businesses with their exporting goods and needs. After multiple congressional hearings, and after hearing from the SBA's top STEP official, H.R. 8844, the STEP Improvement Act, is set to advance during today's markup.

The second piece of legislative business today is a result of the Treasury Department and the Secretary of the Treasury ignoring this Committee and the nation's 33 million small businesses. Despite having an important role within the Paycheck Protection Program, and despite a legal and statutory responsibility to testify before this Committee, Secretary Yellen has decided it is beneath her to talk to us. Therefore, I introduced the Resolution of Inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to provide us with important information and communication regarding the agency's role within PPP. This is about transparency and oversight. This is about holding this administration accountable to not only Congress, but also to America's small businesses and their millions of workers.

To conduct proper oversight on behalf of the American taxpayers and to enact responsible legislative solutions, Congress requires clear and comprehensive information. Without it, they are just ideas that lack justifications.

Despite my concerns for how the SBA is functioning, the SBA Administrator and her top deputies have testified before this Committee. Madam Chair, I cannot say the same for the Department of Treasury.

As I said earlier, these are important issues. Later today, the Federal Reserve is once again going to raise interest rates. Ongoing interest rate increases are the direct result of persistently high inflation. Small businesses are being challenged day in and day out, whether it is inflation, ever-present supply chain issues, a labor crisis, or burdensome regulations. They deserve our attention. They deserve SBA's attention. And they deserve the Treasury Secretary's attention. Anything less is unacceptable.

Madam Chair, I look forward to today's debate and I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

Does any other Member seek recognition for the purpose of making an opening statement?

H. RES. 1298

Seeing none, we will now move to the consideration of H. Res. 1298, a Resolution of Inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the role of the Department of Treasury in the Paycheck Protection Program of the Small Business Administration introduced by Ranking Member Luetkemeyer.

I would now like to recognize the Ranking Member for an opening statement.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Today, the Committee is considering a Resolution of Inquiry directing the Secretary of Treasury to transmit documents to the House related to the department's role in the Paycheck Protection Program.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to take hold here in the United States, Congress moved quickly to assist Americans in our economy weather the storm. The largest program enacted was the Paycheck Protection Program, or the PPP. The PPP provided small businesses with financial support in the form of forgivable loans through private sector lenders. And that was a key characteristic of this program. It was not a direct loan program through the federal government; rather, community banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions were disbursing and interacting with the nation's small businesses. While this program was administered by the Small Business Administration, the Department of Treasury was charged with expeditiously onboarding new lenders. With the program firmly in the PPP forgiveness period, it only makes sense for Congress, and specifically, this Committee, to perform its due diligence and conduct oversight over the program.

Congress recognized our oversight need when funding these programs by enacting testimony requirements for both the SBA Administrator and the Secretary of Treasury. Not later than 150 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, and not less than twice each year or thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury was required to testify before this Committee. We are now 513 days from the first testimony deadline and Secretary Yellen has testified a grand total of zero times before this Committee. The secretary's failure to appear is not for a lack of trying for the Members of this Committee. The requests were sent to Secretary Yellen on May 26, 2021; July 6, 2021; July 28, 2021, March 1, 2022, and June 13, 2022. The Chairwoman herself has even vocally supported having Secretary Yellen testify.

Despite these outreach examples and requests, Secretary Yellen has continuously ignored her legal requirement to testify before this Committee. To make matters worse, to date I have yet to receive even a written response from Secretary Yellen to any one of my requests. It was not until I communicated my concern about the lack of response to the Treasury Department Office of Inspector General, that I was finally informed that the Treasury admitted to mishandling my letters. Yeah, right.

Lack of communication, whether that be in writing or testimony before this committee severely obstructs our ability to conduct oversight over critical pandemic relief programs such as PPP. In the end, this administration and Secretary Yellen are not just ignoring our Committee but they are also ignoring and pushing aside America's main street businesses. These are the businesses that transform and drive our economy. These are businesses that are experiencing, just like the rest of America, ongoing and persistent inflation price pressures and an onslaught of punishing regulations. As such, I felt compelled to take an unprecedented step for this Committee and submitted this resolution of inquiry directed at Secretary Yellen.

It seems like each day we get a stark reminder of just how much fraud has occurred within our pandemic relief programs whether it is a GAO report, an Inspector General investigation, or another news article, we are facing what is being referred to as the biggest fraud in a generation.

I have said it before and I will say it again in a generation, fraud is fraud regardless of when it occurred. One of the first steps we as a Congress can take to address these issues is to shine a light on the problem to get a full understanding of what is going on. Unfortunately, Secretary Yellen seems intent on shielding her work and the work of the Treasury Department from congressional oversight. Since day one, I committed to use every tool at my disposal to conduct robust and effective oversight over the programs within our jurisdiction. This resolution is one such tool.

I ask each Member of this Committee to join with me in standing up for Congress's legitimate oversight authority by voting for this resolution. Although a motion to report without recommendation generally indicates that a Committee believes a resolution should receive consideration, I am disheartened that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would not join me in making a stronger statement in support of Congress's right to by reporting this measure favorably. A vote to report this resolution favorably would have been a resounding vote for transparency and the nation's small businesses. Because a motion to report without recommendation can still indicate that this resolution should receive floor time, I will vote yes on this resolution.

With that, Madam Chairwoman, I yield back. Thank you very much.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

Are there any other Members who wish to be recognized for a statement on H. Res. 1298?

I would now like to recognize myself briefly.

As I mentioned earlier, although the PPP program provided a much-needed lifeline to small businesses, there were a number of significant issues with the rollout of the program under the Trump administration. In testimony provided before this Committee in March, the Government Accountability Office indicated that businesses owned by minorities, women, and veterans, faced challenges obtaining loans in the beginning of the program. During that hearing, GAO also testified that approval rates were generally higher for firms with pre-existing relationships with a bank and larger businesses were more likely to have these relationships than the small businesses. According to the SBA's Office of Inspector General and GAO, there has been significant fraud associated with the program due to the guardrails being lowered during the beginning of the program. Moreover, there is a question whether the largest PPP loans had a substantial positive employment effect in the short or medium term. Currently, PPP is in the forgiveness phase of the program which the Committee is actively monitoring. As of May 8, 2022, the SBA made over 10 million full or partial forgiveness payments, representing 88 percent of all PPP loans, totaling over \$725 billion in PPP lending.

Because of these reasons, I generally do not object to the minority requesting more documents, but the Committee's oversight of this program makes this resolution unnecessary. I hope my colleagues will vote with me to report the resolution to the House without recommendation.

If there is no further discussion, the Committee will move on to consideration of H. Res. 1298.

The clerk will report the resolution.

The CLERK. H. Res. 1298 of Inquiry directing—

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Without objection, H. Res. 1298 is considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Does anyone else seek—

Ms. VAN DUYNE. I seek recognition.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. For what purpose does the gentleman from Texas seek recognition?

Ms. VAN DUYNE. To introduce an amendment, Ms. Chairwoman.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The clerk will report the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H. Res. 1298 offered by Ms. Van Dyne of Texas in the matter proceeding—

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The gentlewoman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Over the last 2 years, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where states and local governments instituted shutdown orders, over a trillion dollars have been appropriated and disbursed to small businesses. At the worst times of COVID, this relief allowed small businesses to regain their footing. Not only in my district, Texas 24, but in districts across the country, small business owners were able to keep their lights on, open their doors, and had the ability to pay their employees.

However, with the speed at which this money moved, fraud did occur. Bad actors and criminals took advantage of many of the small business relief programs and the estimates provided by the Inspector Generals and the Secret Service pegged the amount of potential fraud near the hundred billion dollar mark. Some have labeled it the biggest fraud in a generation. This is absolutely unacceptable and we must do everything in our power to ensure that every dollar that was taken illegally is tracked down and returned and that all criminals are held accountable.

Any and all federal agencies that had a role must be working in tandem to safeguard and protect American taxpayer dollars. This includes the Department of the Treasury and their cooperating with the SBA in implementing the Paycheck Protection Program. Thus far, American law enforcement officials are making progress to bring justice to those that broke the law, and I want to thank them for their efforts.

However, more work needs to be done. Recovered estimates are changing constantly and at times communicated in the media. My amendment is straightforward and increases transparency. It directs the Treasury Secretary to provide more information on the amount of fraud that has been recovered. No matter what account

the recouped dollars are placed at the Treasury Department, Congress, and more importantly, the American public, must have clear accounting figures readily available.

I am ready and willing to work with my colleagues to ensure that we are using every tool within our toolbox to recover stolen taxpayer dollars in a timely and orderly fashion. In order to do that, we need the cooperation of the biggest agencies within our federal government. The more information that is flowing, the better.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, and I yield back. Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentlelady yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on this amendment?

The gentleman, Mr. Flood, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLOOD. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I speak in support of adopting Member Luetkemeyer's Resolution of Inquiry. I support my colleague's amendment.

Secretary Yellen has a responsibility to come in front of this Committee. Her testimony was not optional, but in fact, mandated by the CARES Act. As Members of this Committee know, President Trump's Treasury Secretary came in front of the Small Business Committee in 2020. He followed his statutory obligation. There is no reason that Secretary Yellen should not be here to do exactly the same thing.

In addition to questions about the Paycheck Protection Program, I have a number of questions about President Biden's policies. It would be helpful if Secretary Yellen would address them.

For example, Secretary Yellen said Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction Act would "usher in the next phase of America's future." If Secretary Yellen were to testify in front of this Committee, I would love to know what she believes this next phase of America's future looks like.

I hear from my constituents every single day that President Biden's spending bill is a disaster and it will raise energy costs. It will raise taxes. And ultimately spend billions of federal dollars for wasteful government programs that our children and grandchildren will be saddled with for years to come.

Just yesterday, the Ranking Member's office received data about where small businesses are, what small businesses are thinking, and they are very pessimistic about our future. If you look at the latest numbers, Americans are spending down their cash, deposits in banks are going down, and loans are going up. Surely, this is not the future that Secretary Yellen would envision, and without her testimony, we simply do not know what her vision is.

Staying on the subject of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, let's talk about the bill's enormous expansion of the IRS. This has small business owners across the nation concerned that they are going to be targeted by an out-of-control, weaponized Department of Treasury. Last Thursday, Secretary Yellen touted the \$80 billion in funding for the IRS by claiming that the money would go towards getting constituents' questions answered more quickly.

I have heard from constituents and small businesses in my district about their frustration with the IRS, and yes, they do want their questions answered. However, the reality is the IRS provision within the IRA was included as a pay-for. The IRS funding is expected to raise \$240 billion in additional revenue for the bill to fi-

nance other Biden admin policies. That is why the Biden administration wanted to include it in the bill. If Secretary Yellen were here, I would love to ask why the bill could not have spent maybe a half, a quarter, or even a tenth of the amount on the IRS or kept its funding strictly focused on customer service rather than using it to audit and harass the American people.

I would also love to hear from Secretary Yellen on the issue of inflation. Small businesses consistently rank inflation as one of their top concerns in surveys. Secretary Yellen called inflation “transitory” until finally admitting she was wrong about the inflation crisis in comments to Wolf Blitzer in a CNN interview in June of this year. Now that Secretary Yellen has finally recognized the reality that inflation is a serious problem that cannot be wished away, I would love to hear what she plans to do about it. If Secretary Yellen testified in front of this Committee, I would like to ask her what the administration is going to do about inflation, the very same inflation that is crushing Americans and small business.

The small businesses of Nebraska would benefit from some clarity from the Secretary on how the Biden administration plans to get us out of this mess that it has made of its own creation. I know they are not alone. The American people deserve answers from the Treasury secretary.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Chair? Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Stauber is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STAUBER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just yesterday, federal charges were brought against 48 people in the state of Minnesota for what is known to be the largest fraud case in the United States related to COVID-19 aid dollars. These individuals created shell companies and enrolled in COVID relief programs, defrauded taxpayers of \$250 million to purchase luxury cars, houses, jewelry, and coastal resort properties.

During COVID-19, the unfortunate reality is that oversight mechanisms fell by the wayside. Now is the time for us and our federal agencies to step up and try to recoup some of what was fraudulently stolen from the American taxpayer.

That is why I am grateful for Congresswoman Van Duyne’s amendment. The congresswoman’s amendment provides us, the Members of the Small Business Committee here, an opportunity to answer some important questions. How many bad actors are out there? How much money was stolen? How much money can we expect to recover? How can we make sure this never happens again?

We on this Committee have a job, a duty to demand accountability no matter the party in charge. To all of my colleagues, the American people are not our piggybank. Instead of continuing to spend their hard-earned money, they demand we find that fraudulent, stolen taxpayer money and bring it back to the American people. I implore everyone on this Committee to vote for the congresswoman’s amendment as well as the underlying ROI.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.
Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?
For what purpose does the gentleman—

Mr. DONALDS. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Donalds, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members, I actually am in support of the Van Duyne amendment. I think it is critical that we get the necessary information from SBA, from Treasury with respect to dollars that have been fraudulently taken from the American people. Everybody knows the reports. We are well aware of the issues, but it is time to do the necessary investigations. The amendment by the gentleday from Texas will help us get the necessary information this Committee needs to actually protect the interests of taxpayers all across the United States.

Secondarily, I think one of the things that we definitely have to make sure we do as well is make sure that the Treasury Secretary lives up to her legal obligations. I stress for the American people who may be watching, her legal obligations to testify in front of the Small Business Committee. We are now going on close to 20 months in the 117th Congress and the Treasury Secretary has not made herself available even though federal statute requires her to make herself available to this Committee.

The Members have very serious questions for Secretary Yellen. Number one on my list, frankly, is where did this proposal come from in the Treasury Department that would allow the Treasury Department to look into the private bank transactions of the American people? When this proposal was floated a year ago, people across the political spectrum—Republican, Democrat, Independents—they all flipped out. Like, they were all like, wait, what? That is insane. Where did this proposal come from? I would love to hear the Secretary's comments on that because it is important for the American people to understand exactly the mindset of people who are working in the federal bureaucracies, namely in the Treasury Department, and what their goals and ideas are about future plans they may or may not have. I think it is important for the Treasury Secretary who, once again, as I state, is legally obligated to testify in front of this Committee, to present herself so she can actually fulfill her duties to the American people.

Secondarily, and it has probably already been stated but I would be remiss if I do not restate it, inflation is running hot in this country at 8.3. I know the president thinks that it has kind of calmed down, but what the president does not seem to realize is that when inflation is still running at 8.3 year over year, the highest in 42 years, that means that prices across the board are strangling the American consumer and American small businesses.

I was with several small businesses yesterday who were visiting the nation's capital. Top of mind for them, the cost of products needed in order for them to run their businesses. Secondarily, the cost of diesel fuel and what it takes to transport the goods that they need either to their storehouses or for them to transmit it to their customers. Core inflation is running at 6.3 percent. That is actually up higher on a month-to-month basis. One of the key rea-

sons for that, obviously, is electricity prices. I would love to get the Treasury Secretary's commentary on that as well.

I would also love to hear the Treasury Secretary's comments on the administration's plans with the strategic petroleum reserve. It is widely understood that President Biden's decision to try to "buy down" gas prices was to distribute a million barrels per day from the strategic petroleum preserve. Now we are getting reports that that is coming to an end because at some point the reserves run out. What are the administration's plans to replenish the strategic petroleum preserves? What are the administration's plans about the additive needed for diesel fuel which is an additive that actually comes mostly from Russia? What are the administration's plans around that?

I think all these questions are questions at the heart of what small business owners in the United States are facing every single day. One member of the administration who is legally obligated to testify in front of the Small Business Committee has yet to make herself available. I think that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle should be just as concerned about her lack of testimony as I am and as my colleagues on my side of the aisle.

With that, Members, we should be supporting the Van Duyne amendment. It is a great amendment. We need to do the necessary oversight so we can advocate for the small business owners that live in every one of our communities all across this great land.

With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman, Ranking Member, Mr. Luetkemeyer, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank Ms. Van Duyne for an important and thoughtful amendment. I could not agree more. I certainly appreciate the comments of the other Members on our side of the aisle with regards to this amendment and the other concerns I have with Secretary Yellen. We need to know what kind of thought process is going on. What kind of concerns the administration and, all of the people within the administration have for the issue that is in front of us. How are they thinking about the fraud? How are they thinking about this PPP program? How are they talking to each other about this? Are they talking at all? Is there any concern at all about fraud or about the concerns of forgiveness and how the program is going? We have no idea. We are responsible for all that and yet we have no idea of what the thought process is because we do not know from Ms. Yellen because she will not show up.

Fraud is fraud. I think that no matter when it took place or how, we need an all-hands-on-deck approach to deliver justice and recoup whatever has been done fraudulently, whatever has been stolen fraudulently. We keep getting a new report every week. I think it was, what, the week before last we had another report with regards to the EIDL program. Another \$1.3 billion that could have gone to foreign entities.

We have a job to do. We have to take that responsibly and do our job responsibly and hold people accountable. That is part of

being a legislator. In order to do our job properly, we have to have the cooperation of the administration's officials, all the way down from the secretary of each cabinet position, all the way down to the lowest member of each part of those agencies. We need to be able to talk to those folks and get the information from them. That is what Ms. Van Dyne has done in her amendment. I certainly appreciate her advocacy of this.

With that, I thank you and I urge a yes vote.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

I now would like to recognize myself.

We all share the same concerns about fraud in SBA's COVID-19 relief programs. In fact, earlier this year, the Ranking Member and I both introduced companion legislation that we all voted for and which is now public law, extending the statute of limitations in PPP and COVID EIDL fraud cases. However, while this amendment includes fraud and COVID EIDL, EIDL advance, targeted EIDL and RRF, the Committee will continue holding oversight hearings and working with the IG, PRAC, and DOJ, and they are working right now to address fraud within SBA COVID reliefs.

If there is no further discussion, the question is on the amendment by the gentlelady from Texas.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentlelady has requested a recorded vote. Pursuant to Committee Rule 13 and House Rule XI, further proceedings on the amendment are postponed.

Are there any further amendments to H.Res. 1298?

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Chairwoman, I have an amendment at the dais.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The clerk will report the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H. Res. 1298 offered by Mr. Meuser of Pennsylvania.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEUSER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

We all recognize that small businesses are the foundation under which American prosperity rests. Madam Chair, I have some bad news. There are cracks in this foundation. These cracks are deepening and widening due to runaway inflation placing extreme pressure on the most vulnerable, yet the most vital businesses in our society. Small business owners are among the most motivated in our communities; yet, despite every trick in the book and deploying every resource available, small businesses are no longer succeeding. They are barely surviving.

As Members of the Small Business Committee, we would be derelict in our duty if we stand idly by watching as the dominoes fall. In fact, it would be cruel not to act. While we have limited tools to stem the rising tide of inflation, there are some levers we can pull to create a less hostile environment for the most important job creators of our economy.

One of those levers is government regulations. It is a fact that government regulations have an outside influence on our free enterprise in America, disproportionately hurting small businesses. It is a fact that the federal regulatory behemoth comes at an extreme cost to the American public, hampering productivity, raising prices, holding back economic development, pausing job creation, and impeding commerce.

Just one example of the harmful regulations being proposed by this administration is the SEC's Climate Disclosure Rules. This rule would implement even more burdens on American small businesses at a time when they are already struggling to combat record-high inflation, high energy costs, workforce shortages, et cetera, et cetera.

What can be done to help small businesses navigate this maze of regulatory red tape? The first step is knowledge. We must collect the necessary information so we are all aware of how small businesses are being held back. This is where my amendment comes in. When the Department of the Treasury drives economic policy in this country, policy which deeply affects small businesses, we must be aware of what actions and regulatory assistance is being provided by the Treasury to small business which is what my amendment will do. By voting yes on this amendment, we would begin repairing the cracks in our economic foundation and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Ms. YOUNG KIM. Madam Chair?

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentlelady from California, Ms. Kim, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. YOUNG KIM. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to speak in support and in favor of my colleague Meuser's amendment. With inflation and prices at a 40-year high, it is imperative that we hear from Secretary Yellen on how the administration's policies are impacting our job creators, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and workers. The Committee also needs to understand why the administration got the fiscal policy wrong when she said other administration officials described inflation as transitory.

The current inflation rate is anything but transitory. Instead, it has been 513 days since Secretary Yellen missed the deadline to be in front of this Committee. Our small business owners are demanding answers. My constituents are demanding answers. I hear this all the time as I travel throughout my district. The ROI and the amendments offered by my colleagues Van Duyne, Meuser, and others are some of the few tools that we have at our disposal to request answers from Members of the cabinet.

I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle join us to discharge the ROI from this Committee and get a vote on the House floor. We must get answers from Secretary Yellen because it is long overdue.

I yield back my time.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentlelady yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thanks to Mr. Meuser for his efforts in offering this amendment. The American economy is dependent upon the success of small businesses, and right now these businesses are in deep trouble. Government red tape and overly burdensome regulations choke off economic growth and suppress job creation.

For example, I am deeply concerned about the SEC's ESG greenhouse gas proposed rule and the unintended consequences it will have for small businesses. I am glad to hear the SEC Chairman is starting to clarify its intention for small businesses but there are a lot of questions and concerns that remain. Compound these pressures with out-of-control inflation, it is no surprise that small businesses are struggling everywhere. Whatever actions or assistance the Treasury is taking to assist small businesses with addressing government regulations, we need to know about. Congress needs answers and small businesses need relief. The time to act is now, starting with this amendment.

I think one of the things that concerns me is, and we talked about this yesterday with the trade representative, and I have talked about this with Administrator Guzman, are the Small Business Administrator and her officials contacting and talking to the administration? Is there any coordination? Is there any communication of them talking with the administration and explaining the concerns with regards to inflation, rules and regulations, taxation? We can say this over and over again, but if there is no communication, how can the administration understand the impact of what they are doing to small businesses which, my goodness sakes, 99 percent of the businesses in this country are small businesses. If we do not know the impact of all of this, the SBA is behind and derelict in its duty. If we do not require these things to be done and said and provide the oversight, we are derelict in our duty. It is very important that we pressure the administration of the Small Business Administration to contact and coordinate with the administration as a whole and with Congress with regards to how things are going. This is like driving a car down the road with the lights off. You are going to wind up in the ditch. This is extremely important that we have this kind of oversight. That the coordination between these agencies is there. Mr. Meuser's amendment is helping us to find how these regulations are doing, the impact of those, who is communicating doing what, is there communication at all?

With that, Madam Chair, I certainly support the amendment and urge my colleagues to do the same. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Now I recognize myself briefly.

When it comes to small businesses, federal regulations provide clear rules of the road and level the playing field. The bottom line is that big corporations, not small businesses, benefit from the roll-back of regulations. The SBA's Office of Advocacy works with federal agencies to produce smart, well-crafted regulation and smart,

well-crafted rules have the potential to unleash innovation and provide critical health and safety and environmental protections.

Finally, this amendment has nothing to do with PPP and will most likely destroy the resolutions privilege.

If there is no further discussion, the question is on the amendment by the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Seeing none, the question is now—

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it.

The amendment is not agreed to.

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Chair, I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. A recorded vote has been requested and pursuant to the House rule it will be postponed.

Does anyone seek recognition to offer an amendment?

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the dais.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The clerk will report the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H. Res. 1298 offered by Mr. Williams—

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I offer this amendment on behalf of the American people.

Let's be clear. Things are getting worse, not better. Runaway inflation is laying siege to this nation and shipping containers are piled up on docks, and ships remain idle offshore. Massive worker shortages are worsening this country's already fragile fiscal situation, and the Labor Department reported an enormous 8.3 percent leap in consumer prices over the past year. I am a business owner and I can tell you that that is true and it is right with us as we speak.

Core inflation prices jumped .6 percent since July and even the Department of Defense acknowledges this moment as a critical juncture, concerned that rising inflation will drive small businesses out of the defense industrial base, leaving our nation vulnerable to attack. For months, we have been living in a world where Americans were forced to make difficult and sometimes impossible choices as every part of their daily lives becomes increasingly expensive.

Despite this, their government, specifically Secretary Yellen, who we have heard a lot about today, had the audacity to describe this period as transitory. A new word that just kind of popped up. I have news for her and news for you. I am a lifetime small business owner and it is not. It is here and it is getting worse.

The Department of Treasury is charged with implementing economic and fiscal policy in this country. As such, it was tasked with collaborating with the SBA on the Paycheck Protection Program, a program intended to assist small businesses during a period of intense economic distress caused by poor state and local government policies enacted during the coronavirus pandemic. Now, while the economic pain of government forced closures had immediate nega-

tive impacts on small business, we must not be so blind as to ignore or minimize as Secretary Yellen did and has. This slow bleed to slow businesses is caused by rising inflation, labor shortages, and disruptions to the supply chain, not to mention talked about tax increases.

Therefore I urge you, Madam Chair and my colleagues, to support this amendment. My amendment requires the Department of Treasury to report to Congress the actions taken and communications made with the Small Business Administration to assist small businesses in response to these economic headwinds. While the pandemic may have been the catalyst to this country's current economic misfortune, we continue to see the effects that bad government policy has on small businesses. We must be aware of what our government is doing for small businesses, especially in these challenging times because small businesses are basically 99 percent of what we have in our country.

Again, I urge your support of my colleagues and I yield my time back.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized?

Mr. DONALDS. Madam Chair?

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. For what purpose does the gentleman seek recognition?

Mr. DONALDS. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members, I think being in support of the Williams amendment is critical. One of the key things we obviously know is that the SBA does have communications with business owners throughout the United States. I am quite sure that business owners, especially during the last couple of years have been commenting to SBA about some of the headwinds they are facing. One of the key ones has been labor shortages throughout the United States. If you look at productivity, the productivity measure is actually down for 2 consecutive quarters. If productivity is down, what are the real implications of labor markets on small businesses owners throughout the United States? What has been the communication between small businesses owners and the SBA about whether it is specific issues in their company or in their industry or with government regulations and/or government policies that are putting more strain on labor markets for small business owners? I think it is timely information that this Committee needs to help advise SBA, and in some respects bring light to some of the policy challenges, economic challenges that are existing, and whether the current administration, in my opinion it is the current administration, but whether it is the current administration, it is adding to the difficulty of small business owners specifically in the case of labor shortages. We all know that there were severe labor shortages last year. We are also very clear about why there were labor shortages last year. And just because unemployment appears to be low at 3, 4 points, whatever it is right now, its low U-6 unemployment rate, the labor shortage issues still exist. Companies are still struggling in hiring employees to work in their small business and wage rates have

gone up precipitously. They have gone up substantially for a small business owner. All that creates pressure. I am quite sure there have been communications with the SBA on this. This Committee needs to be privy to those conversations and that is why we should be in support of the Williams amendment. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Ms. TENNEY. Madam Chair? Madam Chair?

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Tenney.

Ms. TENNEY. Yes, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I, too, support the Williams amendment and I am also a fellow small business owner, although maybe we would be considered micro since we only have 70 employees.

I wanted to just talk about the core responsibility of Congress to provide oversight over the president and the federal bureaucracy. It is our duty on behalf of the American people to ensure they faithfully execute our laws and the responsibilities to the public. However, throughout the past 18 months, this administration has consistently acted to block and avoid our questions. We simply cannot get answers and documents requested.

Almost 2 years ago, the Small Business Administration was given unprecedented responsibility to help our small businesses respond to and survive the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In return, the SBA and the Treasury, under Janet Yellen, have demonstrated a shocking lack of responsiveness to the concerns and questions from congressional offices and small businesses. In addition, to this day, many of these small businesses continue to suffer in the wake of the pandemic with never-ending arbitrary rules, the nationwide supply chain breakdown, record high energy prices, and decades high inflation has not gone away even though it might appear to be transitory and maybe here to stay. We do not know from Secretary Yellen.

However, the SBA has yet to respond with any policies to effectively tackle these important issues head on. While we are here today to discuss Secretary Yellen's refusal for well over a year to follow a congressional mandate and appear before this Committee to discuss the Treasury Department's work on the Paycheck Protection Program, many of us have had similar difficulties with other members of the administration.

Over the past year, the SBA has consistently stonewalled me and my office as we have requested and tried to get simple answers as to why they provided forgiveness for 38 individual Paycheck Protection Program loans totaling approximately \$67 million in taxpayer money to affiliates of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. When the Paycheck Protection Plan or Program was created by Congress in the CARES Act and then reauthorized in December of 2020 in the Omnibus bill, Congress applied affiliation rules prohibiting the SBA from issuing and forgiving PPP loans to entities with more than 500 employees across their affiliates, and it only excluded hotels and restaurants. I assert and argue that Planned Parenthood is neither a hotel nor a restaurant.

Planned Parenthood, with over 16,000, not 500 or less, employees nationwide is the nation's largest abortion provider and falls well above the 500 employee threshold for PPP eligibility. During Secretary Guzman's confirmation hearing in the Senate, she promised to investigate why the SBA wrongly approved PPP loans for Planned Parenthood affiliates. However, since that hearing, the SBA went on to confirm an additional six PPP loans, including \$10 million for Planned Parenthood of Greater New York in my home state. Therefore, in front of this Committee last November, I asked Secretary Guzman if she planned on illegally forgiving these PPP loans and if she planned on asking Planned Parenthood to return the money. She refused to answer. Again, stonewalling us. Then 6 months later, Secretary Guzman's office finally responded to my questions for the record saying that the SBA had forgiven 35 Planned Parenthood SBA loans illegally. During the April hearing, I proceeded to ask her why the SBA thought they were allowed to award and forgive these loans to Planned Parenthood. She again refused to provide any answer to my office or to me personally during that Committee hearing. Then in May of this year, Patrick Kelley, the Associate Director of the SBA Office of Capital, came in front of this Committee. I asked him the same question as Secretary Guzman. He refused to provide any answer on why Planned Parenthood was eligible for these loans.

Their behavior is completely unacceptable. Our federal bureaucracy must be responsible for its actions. We cannot tolerate arbitrary decision making and this flagrant violation of the law. I think it is time we passed this common sense Resolution of Inquiry and finally get some straight answers from the administration and the Department of Treasury and have Secretary Yellen perform her constitutional duty in appearing before this Committee. This is our job. This is our job to provide oversight which is why I support the Williams amendment, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same. We are here to help the American people and help our small business community as many of us are small business owners, not to get into a partisan game. This is an issue that is not partisan. She is supposed to appear before the Committee and we need to have answers on these issues in applying the law that we have passed in this House.

With that, I yield back my time. Thank you.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentlelady yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. MFUME. Madam Chair?

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. MFUME. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MFUME. I am speaking against this particular amendment and the one previous, Madam Chair, simply because as well intentioned as they may be, it strikes me that the date range being covered by both of these is from January 21, 2021, until the present, which was the day that a new administration took over. Since these are pandemic related, I would have hoped that we would be looking at trying to get information that covers the width and the breadth of the pandemic which goes back a year before that to

March of 2020. No matter how well intentioned, it just strikes me as being more partisan than it could or should be. If we are really interested in trying to figure out the impact on small businesses during the pandemic in particular and also the fraud that may have been involved, we would want to cover a broader period of time. I will not be voting for either. I will vote for the Van Duyne amendment. I think it is a good amendment.

I do want to also say, Madam Chair, that I appreciate your patience with Ms. Yellen. It is a patience we have all tried to display, but it is rather frustrating that a Member who has a constitutional and policy directive to come before this Committee refuses to do so. I do not understand that and I know how it is frustrating you. I know that it is not your fault but at some point in time, Ms. Yellen is either going to have to get her driver or an Uber or something to get up to Capitol Hill and come before this Committee because I have done a lot trying to contain myself over these last 18 months about her refusal to do so.

I yield back.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentleman from Missouri is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I thank Mr. Williams for offering this common sense amendment.

As Mr. Williams so clearly stated, small businesses are being crushed under the weight of immense economic pressure. The Paycheck Protection Program may have been the government's first immediate response to provide economic relief for this country's struggling small businesses, but their troubles are far from over. Consequences of poor government policies have created an untenable economic situation for the hardest working and most vulnerable businesses in our country. Just the latest polling data from the Job Creators Network, 57 percent think we are in a recession; 65 percent now have crime as one of the most important issues that they are dealing with.

Thank you to Mr. Stauber who held a roundtable last week on this very issue. There is one issue after another that is troubling and overwhelming our small businesses. The testimony that was at this small business roundtable was chilling to say the least from how some small businesses are having to change their business models and the things they have to do just to be able to open their doors and to accommodate their customers. It is unbelievable.

The consequences of these poor government policies have created a difficult situation for these small businesses. We must have a full picture of what our government is doing to assist these critical businesses which is what Mr. Williams's amendment is trying to do.

I also want to comment on Mr. Mfume's comments. I thank him for those. We are frustrated, too. This is why we are here this morning with Secretary Yellen. I serve on another Committee, on Financial Services, and Secretary Yellen seems to have the time to show up on that Committee. She has been there twice in the last year. And yet she refuses to do her statutory duty to show up here.

It is mind blowing to see how she thumbs her nose at this Committee. I know that the Chairwoman has done her best to try and get Ms. Yellen here and I appreciate her efforts. This is not a slap at her, but this has got to stop. This has got to be a time when we come together and get the information we need to do our job. I think Mr. Williams's amendment is a step in that direction and so I fully support his amendment. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

With that, I want to yield to Mr. Williams for a few more comments.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Well, I will be brief but let me just remind everybody that the Biden administration owns inflation. It has nothing to do with dates. This administration owns inflation. We are seeing nothing happen. Small business is paying for the brunt of it. Quite frankly, if you cannot vote for this amendment, how can you say you support small business and main street America? It is hard for me to believe that. I am a small business owner employing hundreds of people. I see what is happening firsthand since the Biden administration put a full frontal assault on small business. So I just say we need to pass this amendment. I yield my time back.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

I would now like to recognize myself.

I understand the challenges small business are facing with the ongoing economic issues. In fact, I, along with my Democratic colleagues and President Biden, worked together to pass the Inflation Reduction Act last month which will build an economy that works for small businesses. By the way, none of the Members of the Republican party voted for it. It makes a much needed investment to lower energy and healthcare costs, and in turn creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to launch and grow their small businesses. Moreover, the Inflation Reduction Act is fully paid for and will drive deficit reduction over the next decade. You are talking about reducing inflation? This is a bill that does that. The Biden-Harris administration projects more than \$1.5 trillion in deficit reduction this year after reducing the deficit by more than \$350 billion last year. This, in turn, will ease inflationary pressure.

However, this amendment does nothing to address issues facing small businesses. It is a "gotcha" amendment at best. This is not a good faith effort to boost the Committee's oversight capabilities on PPP. This is a minority resolution. If they want to approve an amendment that will destroy their resolutions privilege, I have no issues with that.

If there is no further discussion, the question is on the amendment by the gentleman from Texas.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it.

The amendment is not agreed to.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Chair, I request a recorded vote.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman has requested a recorded vote. Pursuant to Committee Rule 13 and House Rule XI, further proceedings on the amendment are postponed.

Does anyone else seek recognition to offer an amendment?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the dais that needs to be distributed.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The Committee shall stand in recess to enable Committee staff to copy and distribute amendments. Committee staff, please distribute the amendment. I request the Members stay around as the markup will resume shortly.

[Recess]

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The Committee will come back to order.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H. Res. 1298—

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Ranking Member is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

This amendment is similar to the rest of them in that we are looking to get information from Treasury with regards to their concerns about the veterans and the impact that the Small Business Administration has on the various programs, as well as the PPP program. This is an extremely important group of folks. There are separate programs already in the SBA for these folks. Is the Treasury Department getting advice from anybody? Is SBA getting advice from anybody with regards to veterans?

We had a small business roundtable with veterans, just specifically for veterans last fall, as well as a showcase to showcase the importance of veterans and how they are such an important part of our small business community and entrepreneurs. They are an important group that we need to really consider. As I mentioned, the SBA already has separate programs for them.

You know, Treasury is locked together at the hip. I know there have been some comments made that they are only with PPP, but they are not. They are locked at the hip with SBA from the standpoint that anything that goes on in the economy, they have a responsibility to provide oversight, and I am sure in an advisory capacity, the president as well. We need to know what they are talking about and what kind of concerns they have.

When we have regulations that are out of control, this is a huge impact and can impact veterans. I got stopped on the street this morning of all things by an individual who was concerned about some regulations that are impacting their industry. It was not veteran concerns but it is just another example of the out of control rules and regulations agenda of this administration that I think we need to have some clarity on. We need to have some oversight over, and we need to expose what is going on.

I cannot let go of the comment by the Chairman with regards to the Inflation Expansion Act. This bill that no Republicans voted for, did nothing to stop inflation. CBO says it does nothing to stop inflation, that it probably increases inflation. To say that it reduces debt when you have \$350 billion of the \$740 billion paid for is like saying you are going to raise interest rates 10 percent but, oh, by the way, we are going to reduce it 1 down to 9 and you are actually saving 1 percent on interest or whatever, that is crazy. That is backwards thinking. This bill expanded the national debt by over

\$400 billion and the Wharton School of Business says it could cost up to a trillion dollars, which would be another \$250+ billion worth of debt.

The thought process of the majority on inflation and rules and regulations is mindboggling. This is why we are here this morning, to voice our concerns over the various issues that the Treasury Department has oversight over and input into. We need to understand what the thought process is with the administration and the various things that they are having oversight over. We need to see that communication. What are they saying? Are they truly concerned about it or is it paying lip service to it? Right now if you view their actions rather than their words, they do not care about small businesses. This Committee cares about small businesses. That is our job, and our job is to provide oversight to make sure they do care about small businesses.

Madam Chair, with that I will close. I ask for support of the amendment and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. FLOOD. I do, Madam Chair.

I would move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLOOD. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the Ranking Member for bringing this amendment forward.

Veterans and the access of veterans that they have to capital is important to me. I would like to have the opportunity to visit in this setting with Secretary Yellen to ask questions about what the Department of Treasury is doing to make sure that these programs that we fund as a federal government are putting capital in the hands of veterans.

In my district, I am very proud to be the host district for Offutt Air Force Base, one of our nation's leading strategic command centers for not only the nuclear triad but the 55th Wing of the U.S. Air Force. We have, because of that, a lot of airmen and women that work in Bellevue, Nebraska, in Sarpy County, Nebraska. When they are done with their service, they might want the opportunity of the American dream by starting a business. Too often than not, some of these programs are difficult to access. Veterans often do not know where to go. These are men and women who have served their country at home and abroad. They have been on missions that most of us would never want to even talk about. When they complete their service, they look at the opportunities that they have and they want to locate where their kids are going to school and the education that the kids receive in Bellevue, Nebraska is stellar. That is why we see so many airmen deciding to stay in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and live in eastern Nebraska.

I want to specifically talk about an opportunity for the Small Business Administration and veterans. I would like to share this opportunity with Secretary Yellen, and I would like to get her opinion on what the SBA can do specifically to make sure that this capital gets in the hands of veterans.

Mayor Rusty Hike in Bellevue, Nebraska, has led the way on redeveloping what they call Old Town Bellevue. This is where the first settlers following Lewis and Clark made their way across the Missouri River, Iowa to Nebraska, and settled what became Fort Crook as a U.S. Army Base. This is where Standing Bear had his trial, where the Federal District Court declared that "I am a man." It was historically significant. Mayor Hike is in the process of revitalizing Old Town by bringing multiuse real estate opportunities together and he wants to see small business grow and thrive. That means he needs veterans. There are over 10,000 active servicemembers that are on the Offutt Air Force Base. Think about how many veterans we have just in this one county in eastern Nebraska, men and women that have served their country and should have the opportunity to take advantage of a small business administration program but yet often these veterans are unaware of the program. They often do not have the skills necessary to put a business plan together. They would benefit from the wraparound services that are available to veterans. With the Ranking Member's amendment today, it gives us an opportunity to talk about a priority, I think, for this Committee. Talk about a priority that we should be talking to Secretary Yellen about to find out what, in fact, is the plan for veteran-owned businesses and to increase opportunities for our veterans. We know what happens when we do not provide opportunities to veterans and we do not recognize their service. Oftentimes, as we know, given some of the things that they have seen, veterans really struggle later in life. I worked with a lot of veterans that deal with PTSD that have seen things and done things in service to our country that makes it difficult sometimes just to manage daily life. These are the people that also are entrepreneurs and business people. With the access to capital and the Small Business Administration or the wraparound services, we need to know as a Committee where are we going with veteran-owned businesses? What are the priorities? How do we help places like Old Town Bellevue revitalize itself in such a historic spot and build on Mayor Rusty Hike's vision?

With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. WILLIAMS. Move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Well, I do not need 5 minutes for this but I listen to all this conversation and it is really hard for me to understand why we just cannot help our veterans for crying out loud. How hard can this be? How is this partisan?

I represent Fort Hood, the largest military base in America. Probably this morning we got 40,000 young men and women down there that are being trained to fight for freedom and liberty but yet the other side just talks about free stuff all the time. Everything is free. Tuition now is free. You do not have to pay your apartment. Forbearance. Illegals get free stuff. It is just unbelievable. We need to cut out the free stuff and we need to help our veterans. We need to help our veterans start a business, create a business. They are trained. They are ready. This amendment does that. But again,

how can you be against our veterans? How can that be? And then you call yourself a patriot? It is hard for me to believe.

I yield my time back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Let me—
Madam?

Yes.

Mr. MFUME. Madam Chair? I move to strike the last word.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes. Will you yield for 2 seconds?

Mr. MFUME. Yes, whatever you would like.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. It is offensive to say that Democrats do not care about veterans. My uncle fought in the Korean War. Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans in the United States have one of the highest participation in the Armed Services. To say that Democrats do not care for veterans—no, that is not the issue here. The issue is this is not germane to the resolution. It is just that simple.

I yield back. Thank you for yielding.

Mr. MFUME. Absolutely, Madam Chair.

I just find it almost amusing that we are told that we are against veterans before the vote has even taken place on the amendment that we just got. Now, unless somebody is clairvoyant, I do not know how you make that assumption. If you are basing it on past history, you cannot just assume that everybody on this Committee does not care about or work with veterans.

I would call the gentleman's attention back to the National Defense Authorization Act with an amendment from myself and was co-lead by Representative Van Duyne to give the SBA more time in transferring certification processes regarding disabled service veterans and their minority-owned or small businesses that they owned. I think the last thing that I wanted this to degenerate into has been what it has been degenerated into, I guess. Again, my reservation here is that this calls for a period of time for an examination that starts January 21, 2021, the day that the current president got sworn in and not covering the full pandemic, or even time before that because this has been an issue that has been affecting veterans for a long time.

In my district in Baltimore, I work very closely with the Maryland Center for Vets. We work with veterans around the state on a number of issues, small business notwithstanding, but also education and other things. It is a bit misleading to suggest that before a vote is taken people are automatically predisposed against veterans when that has not been the case. I plan on now voting against what I probably had some idea that I might vote for which is this amendment. I just do not like the way it is being characterized and the way that Members of this side of the aisle are being painted.

I do not know if I have got any time left, Madam Chair, but I yield it back to you.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Phillips is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I want to associate myself with your remarks and also my colleague from Maryland. I am disgusted by that tone.

As someone who employs veterans and has a Gold Star son, I take grave offense to anybody who would say we Democrats do not support veterans. The shame is not on us. The shame is on anybody who might say that. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

Mr. DONALDS. Madam Chair, the gentleman from Florida.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DONALDS. I move to strike the last word, Madam Chair. Thank you for the time.

Briefly, Members, listen, the amendment in front of us is a good amendment. I think that I would actually encourage all of the Members to take a look at the words in front of us and to have the other conversations associated with commentary when the Committee is adjourned. At the core of what we are trying to do here is make sure that veterans are getting all the assistance that they need and getting the necessary information so that this Committee can do their work on behalf of men and women who have served our country regardless of their politics. I think what we should get focused back on is what is in front of us right now. We can have the other conversations later, because the amendment brought by Ranking Member Luetkemeyer is a quality amendment that this Committee should take up.

With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentlemen yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on the amendment?

The gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Ms. Houlahan, is recognized for 5 minutes.

The gentlelady is muted. You need to unmute.

I guess we are having difficulties.

Ms. Houlahan, can you speak louder, please?

We are going to take a brief recess until we address these technical difficulties.

[Recess]

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The Committee will come back to order.

The gentlelady from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have now been in Congress for the better part of 3-1/2 years and I have worked my darndest to remain civil and decent because I want to always assume the best of everyone across the aisle and within my own party. I take deep offense to the statement of the gentleman who would ever imply that I or my colleagues are not patriots. In fact, I am myself a veteran, my father a veteran, my grandfather a veteran, my brother a veteran, many of my cousins are veterans. I am also a small business person and have been an entrepreneur for a better part of my life before joining Congress. For the better part of 3-1/2 years I have listened to this rhetoric coming from many of my colleagues and I just cannot abide by it any longer. While I appreciate that this is not the conversation that I would like to be having, this is the conversation that I am forced to be having. I would like very much so to ask for the apology from the gentleman who has somehow talked to me and my

colleagues about not being patriots and about not understanding the plight of the veteran. You have no idea, sir, how I would have voted on this particular amendment. It was literally just dropped a few minutes ago.

With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentlelady yields back.

Do other Members wish to be recognized on this amendment?

If there is no further discussion, the question is on the amendment by the gentleman from Missouri.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it. The amendment is not agreed to.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Chair, I request a recorded vote.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman has requested a recorded vote. Pursuant to Committee Rule 13 and House Rule XI, further proceedings on the amendment are postponed.

Does anyone else seek recognition to offer an amendment?

H.R. 8844

Seeing none, we will now consider H.R. 8844, the STEP Improvement Act of 2022 introduced by Mr. Evans and cosponsored by Ms. Young Kim, Ranking Member of the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Subcommittee, Ms. Newman and Mr. Flood.

This legislation would reauthorize STEP for 4 fiscal years and modernize the program to improve communication, accountability, and transparency.

I would now like to recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Kim, for an opening statement.

I would now like to recognize the gentlelady, Ms. Newman, for an opening statement.

Ms. NEWMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning to everyone.

Before I start I would like to identify that I am entering some letters of support for this piece of legislation with my thanks.

Today I am truly proud to stand with my colleagues to introduce this bipartisan bill, the STEP Improvement Act of 2022. The provisions included in this new bill will give small businesses the support that they absolutely need both to become exporters and expand the capital of current exporter businesses.

Businesses less than a year old are vulnerable. All of the great small business people in this room understand that the first year is really tough, and so this is a great opportunity for them to participate. This assistance will be critical to their success. The bill also standardizes the application process and increases spending flexibility for grant recipients. We want to make it as easy as possible for small businesses to receive the assistance they need to succeed and thrive.

As we move our economy out of the worst of the pandemic, we must lend as much support as possible to small businesses. I really support this bill. Small businesses are the absolute backbone of our country and our economy and we must invest in their success. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation. Thank you and I yield back.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The gentlelady yields back.

Now I would like to recognize the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Flood, who is a cosponsor of this bill, for an opening statement.

Mr. FLOOD. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am proud to co-lead H.R. 8844 with my colleagues, Congressman Evans, Congresswoman Newman, and Congresswoman Kim. I also want to thank the Chairwoman and the Ranking Member Luetkemeyer for having this markup today.

H.R. 8844 reauthorizes the State Trade and Export Program for 4 fiscal years. Also known as STEP, this provides financial awards to states to assist small businesses with export development.

In order to better understand the role of STEP, let's take a look at how it has affected Nebraska over the last few years. Since its inception, STEP has connected Nebraska businesses with markets in Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, Brazil, Chile, India, Columbia, Finland, Argentina, Japan, and countless other countries across the globe. To ensure American and Nebraskan companies remain competitive in this modern global age, we need to have an international reach for our products and services.

One business that has benefitted from STEP is Paraclipse Systems, LLC, based in Columbus, Nebraska. This business manufactures nonintrusive fly control products that you install in your home as in flies, the insect. Paraclipse sells fixtures that are attached to a wall. Inside the fixture is a light and glue paper. The flies are attracted to the light and get stuck on the glue paper. Thus, helping remove flies from your home. With a \$10,000 investment, this company was able to expand its sales and create 14 jobs. That is the power of this program, creating jobs and expanding the reach of American businesses. Nebraskans are entrepreneurial and STEP can connect our talented businesswomen and men with the resources that can help grow their business into big and successful enterprises that will employ more people. I am pleased to help co-lead this legislation and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The gentleman yields back.

Are there any other Members who wish to be recognized for a statement on H.R. 8844?

The Ranking Member is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Congressman Evans, as well as Representatives Newman, Kim, and Flood for working on this legislation. From computer and technology parts in California, to agricultural commodities in Nebraska, Congresswoman Kim and Congressman Flood know the importance of advocating for our small exporters on the global stage. This Congress, the Committee has heard from the Associative Administrator of the SBA Office of International Trade and small business stakeholders on the State Trade Expansion Program. This important program partners with states and territories to increase the number of small businesses that export, increase the value of those exports, and increase new trade opportunities. States utilize STEP awards to support small businesses by facilitating foreign trade missions and tradeshow exhibits, or to provide consulting, marketing, and website services. My home state of Missouri has participated in the

STEP program since its inception and over \$2.5 million has been distributed to hundreds of Missouri businesses to support their export ventures.

This legislation will reauthorize STEP for 4 fiscal years from fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2026 so small businesses can continue to utilize the program's export promotion services. Legislation will also improve the implementation of the program by creating a standardized application process. To increase accountability, the legislation requires the Associate Administrator to conduct an annual survey of each state grantee to solicit feedback and determine the best practices.

Further, H.R. 8844 requires SBA to publish an annual report on the program and analysis of the performance metrics of the program, including whether performance goals have been met. In a growing global economy, we must support our small businesses in their export efforts.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8844 and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

I will recognize myself briefly.

I would like to commend Representatives Evans, Kim, Newman, and Flood on their bipartisan work on this bill. Reauthorizing this program will enable more small businesses to compete in the global marketplace. STEP was created to help small businesses navigate the complexities of exporting their goods and services abroad and has become an invaluable tool for thousands of small businesses.

In fiscal year 2021, the SBA assisted more than 3,400 small businesses and supported more than \$832 million in export sales from STEP. The Committee held two hearings on STEP during this Congress and learned they have been a vital resource for small businesses throughout the pandemic. The additional flexibility granted to small businesses allowed them to utilize funding in creative ways to expand their footholds in international marketplaces. The Committee heard from small firms that when physical travel was shutdown, they were able to utilize STEP funds for digital marketing, e-commerce, and website translation services to help make their businesses shine on the global stage. In addition, states used STEP funding to host virtual trainings on export compliance and worked with foreign consultants to support and represent U.S. companies overseas.

H.R. 8844 will reauthorize the program for 4 fiscal years, ensuring it remains a pivotal tool for small businesses looking to export. It will also improve STEP by creating a standardized application process for states, increasing grant spending flexibility, improving communication between the SBA and participating states, and collecting more robust performance metrics.

Lastly, H.R. 8844 will increase access to STEP by allowing entrepreneurs with less than a year in business to take advantage of the opportunities the program presents. This would allow more small businesses to get to market faster and sell their goods and services abroad. I applaud the work of Representatives Evans, Young Kim, Newman, and Flood, and I urge a vote yes.

If there is no further discussion, the Committee will move on to consideration of H.R. 8844.

The clerk will report the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8844—

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Without objection, H.R. 8844 is considered as read and open for amendment at any point.

Does anyone seek recognition to offer an amendment?

Seeing none, the question is now on H.R. 8844.

All in favor, say aye.

All opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and H.R. 8844 is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting H.R. 8844 favorably to the House.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and H.R. 8844 is reported to the House.

Without objection, Committee staff is authorized to correct punctuation and make other necessary technical corrections and conforming changes.

Without objection, Members have 2 business days to file additional supplemental, dissenting, and minority views.

At this time, the Committee stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

[Recess]

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The Committee will come to order.

The Committee will now resume consideration of the amendments on which roll call votes were requested and postponed. There are four postponed recorded votes.

The question now occurs on Van Duyne 1v2. The clerk will please call the roll.

The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez?

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez votes no.

Mr. Golden?

Mr. GOLDEN. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Golden votes no.

Mr. Crow?

Mr. CROW. Yes.

The CLERK. Mr. Crow votes yes.

Ms. Davids?

Ms. DAVIDS. Davids votes yes.

The CLERK. Sorry, could you repeat that, please?

Ms. DAVIDS. Sorry. Davids votes yes.

The CLERK. Ms. Davids votes aye.

Mr. Mfume?

Mr. Mfume?

[No response.]

Mr. Phillips?

Mr. PHILLIPS. I am sorry; is this the Van Duyne amendment?

The CLERK. Correct.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Phillips votes aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Phillips votes aye.

Ms. Newman?
Ms. Newman?
[No response.]
Ms. Bourdeaux?
Ms. BOURDEAUX. Bourdeaux votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Bourdeaux votes aye.
Mr. Carter?
Mr. Carter?
[No response.]
Ms. Chu?
Ms. CHU. No.
The CLERK. Ms. Chu votes no.
Mr. Evans?
Mr. EVANS. No.
The CLERK. Mr. Evans votes no.
Ms. Houlahan?
Ms. Houlahan?
Ms. HOULAHAN. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Houlahan votes aye.
Mr. Kim?
Mr. ANDY KIM. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Kim votes aye.
Ms. Craig?
Ms. CRAIG. Ms. Craig from Minnesota votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Craig from Minnesota votes aye.
Mr. Peters?
Mr. PETERS. Peters votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Peters votes aye.
Mr. Luetkemeyer?
Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Luetkemeyer votes aye.
Mr. Williams?
Mr. WILLIAMS. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Williams votes aye.
Mr. Stauber?
Mr. STAUBER. Stauber votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Stauber votes aye.
Mr. Meuser?
Mr. MEUSER. Meuser votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Meuser votes aye.
Ms. Tenney?
Ms. TENNEY. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Tenney votes aye.
Mr. Garbarino?
Mr. Garbarino?
[No response.]
Ms. Young Kim?
Ms. YOUNG KIM. Kim votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Young Kim votes aye.
Ms. Van Duyne?
Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Van Duyne votes aye.
Mr. Donalds?
Mr. Donalds?

[No response.]

Mr. Fitzgerald? Ms. Salazar?

Mr. Fitzgerald?

Mr. FITZGERALD. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Fitzgerald votes aye.

Mr. Flood?

Mr. FLOOD. Aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Flood votes aye.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Are there any other Members that wish to vote?

The clerk will report the tally.

The CLERK. On this vote there were 17 ayes and 4 noes.

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The amendment is agreed to.

The question now occurs on Meuser 1v2. This amendment previously failed by voice vote.

The clerk will please call the roll.

The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez?

Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez votes no.

Mr. Golden?

Mr. GOLDEN. Yes.

The CLERK. Mr. Golden votes aye.

Mr. Crow?

Mr. CROW. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Crow votes no.

Ms. Davids?

Ms. DAVIDS. Davids votes no.

The CLERK. Ms. Davids votes no.

Mr. Mfume?

Mr. Mfume?

[No response.]

Mr. Phillips?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Phillips votes aye.

The CLERK. Mr. Phillips votes aye.

Ms. Newman?

Ms. Newman?

[No response.]

Ms. Bourdeaux?

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Bourdeaux votes no.

The CLERK. Ms. Bourdeaux votes no.

Mr. Carter?

Mr. Carter?

[No response.]

Ms. Chu?

Ms. CHU. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Chu votes no.

Mr. Evans?

Mr. EVANS. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Evans votes no.

Ms. Houlahan?

Ms. HOULAHAN. Aye.

The CLERK. Ms. Houlahan votes aye.

Mr. Kim?

Mr. ANDY KIM. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Kim votes no.
 Ms. Craig?
 Ms. CRAIG. Ms. Craig of Minnesota votes aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Craig of Minnesota votes aye.
 Mr. Peters?
 Mr. Peters?
 Mr. PETERS. Peters votes no.
 The CLERK. Mr. Peters votes no.
 Mr. Luetkemeyer?
 Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Yes. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Luetkemeyer votes aye.
 Mr. Williams?
 Mr. WILLIAMS. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Williams votes aye.
 Mr. Stauber?
 Mr. STAUBER. Stauber votes aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Stauber votes aye.
 Mr. Meuser?
 Mr. MEUSER. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Meuser votes aye.
 Ms. Tenney?
 Ms. TENNEY. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Tenney votes aye.
 Mr. Garbarino?
 Mr. Garbarino?
 [No response.]
 Ms. Young Kim?
 Ms. Young Kim?
 [No response.]
 Ms. Van Duyne?
 Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Van Duyne votes aye.
 Mr. Donalds?
 Mr. Donalds?
 [No response.]
 Ms. Salazar?
 Ms. Salazar?
 [No response.]
 Mr. Fitzgerald?
 Mr. FITZGERALD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Fitzgerald votes aye.
 Mr. Flood?
 Mr. FLOOD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Flood votes aye.
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Are there any other Members that wish to vote?
 The clerk will report the tally.
 The CLERK. On this vote there were 12 ayes and 8 noes.
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The amendment is agreed to.
 The question now occurs on Williams 1v2. This amendment previously failed by voice vote.
 The clerk will please call the roll.
 The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez?
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. No.

The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez votes no.
Mr. Golden?
Mr. GOLDEN. No.
The CLERK. Mr. Golden votes no.
Mr. Crow?
Mr. CROW. No.
The CLERK. Mr. Crow votes no.
Ms. Davids?
Ms. DAVIDS. Davids votes no.
The CLERK. Ms. Davids votes no.
Mr. Mfume?
[No response.]
Mr. Phillips?
Mr. PHILLIPS. No.
The CLERK. Mr. Phillips votes no.
Ms. Newman?
[No response.]
Ms. Bourdeaux?
Ms. BOURDEAUX. Bourdeaux votes no.
The CLERK. Ms. Bourdeaux votes no.
Mr. Carter?
[No response.]
Ms. Chu?
Ms. CHU. No.
The CLERK. Ms. Chu votes no.
Mr. Evans?
Mr. EVANS. Evans votes no.
The CLERK. Mr. Evans votes no.
Ms. Houlahan?
Ms. HOULAHAN. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Houlahan votes aye.
Mr. Kim?
Mr. ANDY KIM. No.
The CLERK. Mr. Kim votes no.
Ms. Craig?
Ms. Craig?
[No response.]
Mr. Peters?
[No response.]
Mr. Luetkemeyer?
Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Luetkemeyer votes aye.
Mr. Williams?
Mr. WILLIAMS. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Williams votes aye.
Mr. Stauber?
Mr. STAUBER. Stauber votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Stauber votes aye.
Mr. Meuser?
Mr. Meuser?
Mr. MEUSER. Meuser votes aye. Sorry.
The CLERK. Mr. Meuser votes aye.
Ms. Tenney?
Ms. TENNEY. Aye.

The CLERK. Ms. Tenney votes aye.
 Mr. Garbarino?
 Ms. Young Kim?
 Mr. GARBARINO. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Garbarino votes aye.
 Ms. YOUNG KIM. Young Kim votes aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Young Kim votes aye.
 Ms. Van Duyne?
 Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Van Duyne votes aye.
 Mr. Donalds?
 [No response.]
 Ms. Salazar?
 [No response.]
 Mr. Fitzgerald?
 Mr. FITZGERALD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Fitzgerald votes aye.
 Mr. Flood?
 Mr. FLOOD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Flood votes aye.
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Are there any other Members that wish to vote?
 Mr. MFUME. Madam Chair?
 Ms. CRAIG. Madam?
 Mr. MFUME. I am Mfume of Maryland. I vote no.
 The CLERK. Mr. Mfume votes no.
 Mr. PETERS. Madam Chair, Peters of California votes no.
 The CLERK. Mr. Peters votes no.
 Ms. CRAIG. Madam Chair, Angie Craig from Minnesota votes no.
 The CLERK. Ms. Craig votes no.
 Mr. GARBARINO. How is Mr. Garbarino recorded?
 The CLERK. Mr. Garbarino is recorded as voting aye.
 Mr. GARBARINO. Thank you.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The clerk will report the tally.
 Are there any other Members that wish to vote?
 Mr. CARTER. Madam Chair, Troy Carter.
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Carter, how do you vote?
 Mr. CARTER. Carter votes no.
 The CLERK. Mr. Carter votes no.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The clerk will report the tally.
 The CLERK. On this vote there were 11 ayes and 13 noes.
 Chairwoman VELAZQUEZ. The amendment is not agreed to.
 The question is now on reporting H. Res. 1298 as amended without recommendation to the House.
 All those in favor, say aye.
 All those opposed, say no.
 In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and H. Res. 1298 as amended is reported to the House without recommendation.
 Without objection, the Committee staff—
 Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Chair, we request a recorded vote on that.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Pardon? I am sorry?
 Mr. LUETKEMEYER. We request a recorded vote.

Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. A recorded vote is requested.
The clerk will please call the roll.
The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez?
Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ No.
The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez votes no.
Mr. Golden?
Mr. GOLDEN. Yes.
The CLERK. Mr. Golden votes aye.
Mr. Crow?
Mr. CROW. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Crow votes aye.
Ms. Davids?
Ms. DAVIDS. Aye. Davids votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Davids votes aye.
Mr. Mfume?
Mr. MFUME. Mr. Mfume votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Mfume votes aye.
Mr. Phillips?
Mr. PHILLIPS. Phillips votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Phillips votes aye.
Ms. Newman?
[No response.]
Ms. Bourdeaux?
Ms. Bourdeaux?
Ms. BOURDEAUX. Bourdeaux votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Bourdeaux votes aye.
Mr. Carter?
Mr. CARTER. Mr. Carter votes aye.
The CLERK. Carter votes aye.
Ms. Chu?
Ms. CHU. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Chu votes aye.
Mr. Evans?
Mr. EVANS. Evans votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Evans votes aye.
Ms. Houlahan?
Ms. HOULAHAN. Aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Houlahan votes aye.
Mr. Kim?
Mr. ANDY KIM. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Kim votes aye.
Ms. Craig?
Ms. CRAIG. Ms. Craig votes aye.
The CLERK. Ms. Craig votes aye.
Mr. Peters?
Mr. PETERS. Peters votes aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Peters votes aye.
Mr. Luetkemeyer?
Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Luetkemeyer votes aye.
Mr. Williams?
Mr. WILLIAMS. Aye.
The CLERK. Mr. Williams votes aye.
Mr. Stauber?

Mr. STAUBER. Stauber votes aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Stauber votes aye.
 Mr. Meuser?
 Mr. MEUSER. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Meuser votes aye.
 Ms. Tenney?
 Ms. TENNEY. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Tenney votes aye.
 Mr. Garbarino?
 Mr. GARBARINO. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Garbarino votes aye.
 Ms. Young Kim?
 Ms. YOUNG KIM. Kim votes aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Young Kim votes aye.
 Ms. Van Duyne?
 Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Aye.
 The CLERK. Ms. Van Duyne votes aye.
 Mr. Donalds?
 Mr. DONALDS. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Donalds votes aye.
 Ms. Salazar?
 [No response.]
 Mr. Fitzgerald?
 Mr. FITZGERALD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Fitzgerald votes aye.
 Mr. Flood?
 Mr. FLOOD. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Flood votes aye.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Clerk, how am I recorded?
 The CLERK. You are recorded with a no vote.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. I meant to vote yes.
 The CLERK. Ms. Velázquez votes aye.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. Are there any other Members that wish to vote?
 The clerk will report the tally.
 The CLERK. On this vote there were 25 ayes and 0 noes.
 Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ. The motion to report the resolution as amended to the House without recommendation is agreed to.
 Without objection, Committee staff is authorized to correct punctuation and make other necessary technical corrections and conforming changes.
 Without objection, Members have 2 business days to file additional supplemental, dissenting, and minority views.
 My thanks to all the Members for their participation today. If there is no further business to come before the Committee, without objection this meeting is adjourned. Thank you.
 [Whereupon, at 1:11 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

iv]

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1298

OFFERED BY Mr. Luetkemeyer

In the matter preceding paragraph (1), strike “with respect to” and all that follows through “including”.

In paragraph (1), insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”.

In paragraph (2)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike “and” at the end.

In paragraph (3)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike the period at the end and inserting
“; and”.

Add at the end the following new paragraph:

1 (4) with respect to actions taken by the Depart-
2 ment of the Treasury on and after January 21,
3 2021, to assist small business concerns owned and
4 controlled by veterans and small business concerns
5 owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans
6 (as such terms are defined under section 3 of the
7 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)) with address-
8 ing rising inflation, labor shortages, and disruptions
9 to supply chains, and all such communications be-
10 tween the Secretary of the Treasury and the Admin-
11 istrator of the Small Business Administration relat-
12 ing to any guidance the Administration offered
13 Treasury in targeting economic assistance to such
14 concerns.

Amend the title so as to read: “A resolution of in-
quiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit
certain documents to the House of Representatives relat-
ing to the role of the Department of the Treasury in the
Paycheck Protection Program of the Small Business Ad-
ministration and with respect to economic assistance for
veterans.”.



AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1298**OFFERED BY MS. VAN DUYNÉ OF TEXAS**

In the matter preceding paragraph (1), strike “with respect to” and all that follows through “including”.

In paragraph (1), insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”.

In paragraph (2)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike “and” at the end.

In paragraph (3)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike the period at the end and inserting “; and”.

Add at the end the following new paragraph:

1 (4) with respect to loans made under section
2 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b))
3 in response to COVID–19, from grants under sec-
4 tion 1110(e) of the CARES Act (15 U.S.C.
5 9009(e)), from grants under section 331 of the Eco-
6 nomic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Non-
7 profits, and Venues Act (15 U.S.C. 9009b), and
8 from grants under section 5003 of the American
9 Rescue Plan Act of 2021, all documents and com-
10 munications relating to the amount of funds from
11 such loans or grants that have been recovered from
12 any individual or entity that fraudulently obtained
13 such a loan or grant.

Amend the title so as to read: “A resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the role of the Department of the Treasury in the Paycheck Protection Program and certain other loan and grant programs of the Small Business Administration.”.



AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1298
OFFERED BY MR. MEUSER OF PENNSYLVANIA

In the matter preceding paragraph (1), strike “with respect to” and all that follows through “including”.

In paragraph (1), insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”.

In paragraph (2)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike “and” at the end.

In paragraph (3)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike the period at the end and inserting “; and”.

Add at the end the following new paragraph:

1 (4) with respect to actions taken by the Depart-
2 ment of the Treasury on and after January 21,
3 2021, to assist small business concerns (as defined
4 under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15
5 U.S.C. 632)) with addressing government regula-
6 tions, and all such communications between the Sec-
7 retary of the Treasury and the Administrator of the
8 Small Business Administration relating to any guid-
9 ance the Administration offered Treasury in tar-
10 geting regulatory assistance to small business con-
11 cerns.

Amend the title so as to read: “A resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the role of the Department of the Treasury in the Paycheck Protection Program of the Small Business Administration and with respect to regulatory assistance for small business concerns.”.



AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1298
OFFERED BY MR. WILLIAMS OF TEXAS

In the matter preceding paragraph (1), strike “with respect to” and all that follows through “including”.

In paragraph (1), insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”.

In paragraph (2)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike “and” at the end.

In paragraph (3)—

(1) insert “with respect to the loan programs established under paragraphs (36) and (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36)) (commonly known as the ‘Paycheck Protection Program’),” before “all such”; and

(2) strike the period at the end and inserting “; and”.

Add at the end the following new paragraph:

1 (4) with respect to actions taken by the Depart-
2 ment of the Treasury on and after January 21,
3 2021, to assist small business concerns (as defined
4 under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15
5 U.S.C. 632)) with addressing rising inflation, labor
6 shortages, and disruptions to supply chains, all such
7 communications between the Secretary of the Treas-
8 ury and the Administrator of the Small Business
9 Administration relating to any guidance the Admin-
10 istration offered Treasury in targeting economic as-
11 sistance to small business concerns.

Amend the title so as to read: “A resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the role of the Department of the Treasury in the Paycheck Protection Program of the Small Business Administration and with respect to economic assistance to small business concerns.”.





September 20, 2022

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chairwoman
House Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Luetkemeyer:

We write to express our strong support for the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) at the Small Business Administration and request that you support the reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million to better assist small business exporters.

The STEP grant program is competitive grant allocated to States with the goal to increase the number of small businesses that export. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, **only one percent** of small businesses in the United States export their product and service. The STEP program provides small businesses with the resources and confidence to begin to expand into international markets. These firms have used STEP to attend foreign trade shows and missions, participate in export training, and develop international marketing materials.

Since its creation in 2010, STEP has recorded over \$3.8 billion in exports from more than 12,000 small businesses in the United States. In FY19, \$18 million in STEP funding helped small businesses export over \$974 million in goods and services. This yielded a 54-to-1 return on investment. Moreover, STEP assisted near 3,000 small firms that have not exported before.

For Colorado, the STEP program has been vital in our ability to get more small businesses to start or expand their exports. During the latest STEP period, we assisted 157 companies to sell internationally, helping to create \$24.8 million in projected export sales. These new exports help create or support new, good paying jobs for the years ahead.

The world is starting to open from the pandemic and exporting will be a key component in the economic recovery. We need to ensure small businesses have the resources to compete in the global economy, and STEP is a key to their success.

Again, I strongly support the STEP grant program and encourage your committee to support reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million. Thank you again for your continued commitment to small business exporters and for your public service.



Sincerely,

Michelle Hadwiger
Director, Global Business Development Division
Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade





September 19, 2022

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chairwoman
House Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Luetkemeyer:

We write to express our strong support for the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) at the Small Business Administration and request that you support the reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million to better assist small business exporters.

The STEP grant program is competitive grant allocated to States with the goal to increase the number of small businesses that export. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, **only one percent** of small businesses in the United States export their product and service. The STEP program provides small businesses with the resources and confidence to begin to expand into international markets. These firms have used STEP to attend foreign trade shows and missions, participate in export training, and develop international marketing materials.

Since its creation in 2010, STEP has recorded over \$3.8 billion in exports from more than 12,000 small businesses in the United States. In FY19, \$18 million in STEP funding helped small businesses export over \$974 million in goods and services. This yielded a 54-to-1 return on investment. Moreover, STEP assisted near 3,000 small firms that have not exported before.

For Louisiana, the STEP program has been vital in our ability to get more small businesses to start or expand their exports. During the latest STEP periods that closed September 29, 2021, we assisted 94 companies, helping to create \$22 million in export sales. These new exports help create or support new, good paying jobs for the years ahead.

The world is starting to open from the pandemic and exporting will be a key component in the economic recovery. We need to ensure small businesses have the resources to compete in the global economy, and STEP is a key to their success.

Again, I strongly support the STEP grant program and encourage your committee to support reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million. Thank you again for your continued commitment to small business exporters and for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Larry Collins'.

Larry Collins
Board Member, States International Development Organization
Executive Director, International Commerce, Louisiana Economic Development



State International Development Organizations

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September 20, 2022

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
 Chairwoman
 House Committee on Small Business
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
 Ranking Member
 House Committee on Small Business
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Luetkemeyer:

On behalf of the Governor's International trade offices across the country, we write to express our strong support for the STEP Improvement Act of 2022 (H.R. 8844) and applaud your efforts to reauthorize the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) at the U.S. Small Business Administration. Thank you for your leadership and support for small business exporters.

The STEP grant program is competitive grant allocated to States with the goal to increase the number of small businesses that export. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, *only one percent* of small businesses in the United States export their product and service. The STEP program provides small businesses with the resources and confidence to begin to expand into international markets. These firms have used STEP to attend foreign trade shows and missions, participate in export training, and develop international marketing materials.

Since its creation in 2010, STEP has recorded over \$3.8 billion in exports from more than 12,000 small businesses in the United States. In FY 2021, STEP supported over \$830 million in export sales and assisted over 3,400 small businesses, including many that have never exported before. STEP is a critical component to get more small businesses to start or expand their exports.

H.R. 8844 makes several important changes that will greatly improve the effectiveness of STEP, specifically:

- **Establishes Consistent and Transparent Application Process:** The legislation requires the SBA to establish a consistent application process including regular announcements of the grant and increased transparency on how they award (or not award) grantees. These provisions will greatly assist members in the application and administration of the grant – especially new states and staff that are unfamiliar with the STEP program.
- **Increases Flexibility for States:** The legislation codifies the process for states to reallocate funds within a project period due to market conditions. It also allows states to better support small business entrepreneurs and ensuring they can utilize STEP funds.



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- **Establishes Annual Survey:** Establishing an annual survey and obtaining feedback from the states will help identify best practices and ways to improve the program.
- **Annual Report and Performance Metrics:** The annual report is an important vehicle to understand the return-on-investment and how to best measure the STEP program. This also provides clarity on the data required by SBA and grantees.
- **Authorization of Appropriations:** We fully support the extension of the STEP program. Having a fully reauthorized program will assist all parties in long-term planning and making STEP as effective and efficient as possible.

Again, we strongly support the STEP grant program and encourage your committee to support the reauthorization. These changes in H.R. 8844 will create a stronger and more efficient program, and therefore help more small businesses compete in the global economy. Thank you again for your consideration, and for your public service.

Sincerely,

Andy Karellas

Andy Karellas
Executive Director
State International Development Organizations (SIDO)



State International Development Organizations

444 North Capitol Street • Suite 401 • Washington, DC 20001 • ph 202-352-7485 • www.sidoamerica.org



September 16, 2021

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
 Chairwoman
 House Committee on Small Business
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
 Ranking Member
 House Committee on Small Business
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Luetkemeyer:

I write to express my strong support for the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) at the Small Business Administration and request that you support the reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million to better assist small business exporters.

STEP is a competitive grant allocated to States with the goal to increase the number of small businesses that export. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, **only one percent** of small businesses in the United States export their product or service. STEP provides small businesses with the resources and confidence to begin to expand into international markets, utilizing STEP to attend foreign trade shows and missions, participate in export training, develop international marketing materials, and more.

Since its creation in 2010, STEP has recorded over \$3.8 billion in exports from more than 12,000 small businesses in the United States. In FY20, \$19.5 million in STEP funding helped small businesses export over \$974 million in goods and services. This yielded a 42-to-1 return on investment. Moreover, STEP assisted near 3,000 small firms that have not exported before.

For Michigan, STEP has been vital to encourage small businesses to begin or expand exporting. During fiscal year 2021, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) International Trade program administered 265 STEP grants to Michigan small businesses. Export sales resulting from MEDC support totaled \$558 million to 117 countries in this period. Michigan small businesses have reported facilitated export sales of over \$4.7 billion since the program was re-established in 2011.

The world is starting to reopen, and exporting will be a key component in post-pandemic economic recovery. STEP is critical to small business success and ability to compete in the global economy.

Again, I strongly support the STEP grant program and encourage your committee to support reauthorization and full appropriation of \$30 million. Thank you again for your continued commitment to small business exporters and for your public service.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Tracey
 Director, International Trade, Michigan Economic Development Corporation



State International Development Organizations

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