

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 522

To direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to conduct a pilot program to raise awareness about telecommuting among small business employers, and to encourage such employers to offer telecommuting options to employees.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 13, 2001

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. CLELAND, and Mr. WELLSTONE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to conduct a pilot program to raise awareness about telecommuting among small business employers, and to encourage such employers to offer telecommuting options to employees.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Small Business Tele-
5 commuting Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) telecommuting reduces the volume of peak
2 commuter traffic, thereby reducing traffic congestion
3 and air pollution;

4 (2) the Nation's communities can benefit from
5 telecommuting, which gives workers more time to
6 spend at home with their families;

7 (3) it is in the national interest to raise aware-
8 ness within the small business community of tele-
9 commuting options for employees;

10 (4) the small business community can benefit
11 from offering telecommuting options to employees
12 because such options make it easier for small em-
13 ployers to retain valued employees and employees
14 with irreplaceable institutional memory;

15 (5) companies with telecommuting programs
16 have found that telecommuting can boost employee
17 productivity 5 percent to 20 percent, thereby saving
18 businesses valuable resources and time;

19 (6) 60 percent of the workforce is involved in
20 information work (an increase of 43 percent since
21 1990), allowing and encouraging decentralization of
22 paid work to occur; and

23 (7) individuals with disabilities, including dis-
24 abled American veterans, who own or are employed

1 by small businesses could benefit from telecommuting to their workplaces.

3 **SEC. 3. SMALL BUSINESS TELECOMMUTING PILOT PROGRAM.**
4 **GRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with this Act, the
6 Administrator shall conduct, in not more than 5 of the
7 Small Business Administration’s regions, a pilot program
8 to raise awareness about telecommuting among small business
9 employers and to encourage such employers to offer
10 telecommuting options to employees.

11 (b) SPECIAL OUTREACH TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Administrator shall make special efforts to do outreach to—

12 (1) businesses owned by or employing individuals with disabilities, and disabled American veterans in particular;

13 (2) Federal, State, and local agencies having knowledge and expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities or disabled American veterans; and

14 (3) any group or organization, the primary purpose of which is to aid individuals with disabilities or disabled American veterans.

15 (c) PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the
16 pilot program, the Administrator may only—

1 (1) produce educational materials and conduct
2 presentations designed to raise awareness in the
3 small business community of the benefits and the
4 ease of telecommuting;

5 (2) conduct outreach—

6 (A) to small business concerns that are
7 considering offering telecommuting options; and

8 (B) as provided in subsection (b); and

9 (3) acquire telecommuting technologies and
10 equipment to be used for demonstration purposes.

11 (d) **SELECTION OF REGIONS.**—In determining which
12 regions will participate in the pilot program, the Adminis-
13 trator shall give priority consideration to regions in which
14 Federal agencies and private-sector employers have dem-
15 onstrated a strong regional commitment to telecommuting.

16 **SEC. 4. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

17 Not later than 2 years after the first date on which
18 funds are appropriated to carry out this Act, the Adminis-
19 trator shall transmit to the Committee on Small Business
20 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
21 Small Business of the Senate a report containing the re-
22 sults of an evaluation of the pilot program and any rec-
23 ommendations as to whether the pilot program, with or
24 without modification, should be extended to include the
25 participation of all Small Business Administration regions.

1 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act—

3 (1) the term “Administrator” means the Ad-
4 ministrator of the Small Business Administration;

5 (2) the term “disability” has the same meaning
6 as in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities
7 Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102);

8 (3) the term “pilot program” means the pro-
9 gram established under section 3; and

10 (4) the term “telecommuting” means the use of
11 telecommunications to perform work functions under
12 circumstances which reduce or eliminate the need to
13 commute.

14 **SEC. 6. TERMINATION.**

15 The pilot program shall terminate 2 years after the
16 first date on which funds are appropriated to carry out
17 this Act.

18 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

19 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Small
20 Business Administration \$5,000,000 to carry out this Act.

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