

the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure, for working in a collaborative manner to address the HUBZone program. Bills like this have the ability to make a difference within Federal contracting, and I commend the Chair for bringing this bill forward.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5879, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. NEWMAN).

Ms. NEWMAN. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for all her great work on the Small Business Committee.

I rise in strong support of my bipartisan bill, the HUBZone Price Evaluation Preference Clarification Act. This legislation is designed to expand contracting opportunities to millions of small businesses located in historically underutilized business zones.

More specifically, it would clarify the program's price evaluation language to ensure adequate spending toward HUBZone small businesses, giving more communities the resources they need to build vibrantly. We must ensure that small business in every community is and can benefit from Federal contracting.

By passing this legislation, we will take a crucial step toward a more equitable distribution of resources to small businesses throughout our country. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Federal contracting remains a significant endeavor for many of the Nation's small businesses. H.R. 5879 ensures one of these programs, the HUBZone program, is ready to assist small business contractors. This legislation, which passed favorably out of committee by a voice vote, will level the playing field within the program.

I thank the Chair for bringing this legislation through regular order, and I thank the sponsor and cosponsor for working to address these issues. I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The statutory goal of awarding 3 percent of all prime Federal contracts to HUBZone firms has never been met. H.R. 5879 will enable agencies to better meet this goal by eliminating all ambiguity and clarifying that the HUBZone price evaluation preference applies to orders.

I commend the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. NEWMAN), the sponsor of the

bill, and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SALAZAR), the cosponsor, for working together on this sensible piece of legislation. H.R. 5879 will undoubtedly strengthen the HUBZone program which, in turn, will create jobs and stimulate local economies across the Nation.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 5879 "Hubzone Price Evaluation Preference Clarification Act".

The Small Business Act is instrumental in allowing small businesses to remain competitive amid complex markets.

Small businesses are the engine of our economy and exist as the backbone of local communities across the nation. They are essential contributors to our society, as we must support their growth and progress.

The Hubzone program supports small businesses that are part of historically underutilized business zones. These zones are low-income communities that have increased levels of poverty and high unemployment rates.

The program works to target inequities that make it at times difficult for small businesses within these economically distressed communities to compete.

Within the Small Business Act, preferential price evaluations are given to small businesses participating in the Hubzone program.

Price evaluation preferences ensure that a price offered by a qualified Hubzone small business entity is deemed lower than the price offered by another offeror if the qualified Hubzone business's price is not more than 10 percent higher than the price offered by the otherwise lowest offeror.

These price evaluation preferences are a key feature which allow Hubzone contracts to act as an economic boost for small businesses within high unemployment and low-income areas.

These price evaluation preferences help level the playing field for small businesses that are often minority-owned. In Houston alone, nearly 35 percent of small businesses are minority-owned.

The Hubzone program gives these businesses a chance to compete in competitive markets. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, these small businesses need institutional support more than ever.

H.R. 5879 is necessary to clarify how small businesses can be eligible for price evaluation preferences outlined in the Small Business Act.

The number of Hubzone locations, or areas with historically underutilized business zones, has nearly doubled in the past 20 years according to the Small Business Administration.

Small businesses and the communities they benefit depend on the success of the Hubzone program. It is vital to detail how small businesses can receive benefits from the program.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for passage of H.R. 5879.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5879.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

□ 1615

SMALL BUSINESS WORKFORCE PIPELINE ACT OF 2022

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7622) to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to apprenticeship program assistance for small business development centers, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7622

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022".

SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ASSISTANCE.

Section 21(c)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (T), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in clause (v) of the first subparagraph (U) (relating to succession planning), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in second subparagraph (U) (relating to training on domestic and international intellectual property protections)—

(A) in clause (ii)(II), by striking the period at the end and inserting "and"; and

(B) by redesignating such subparagraph as subparagraph (V); and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(W) providing information and assistance to small business concerns, including by disseminating relevant information from the Department of Labor and other Federal agencies, on how to establish and improve—

"(i) work-based learning opportunities (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302));

"(ii) apprenticeship programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; commonly known as the 'National Apprenticeship Act'; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.);

"(iii) pre-apprenticeship programs; and

"(iv) job training programs."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7622, the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022, introduced by Mr. CROW and cosponsored by Mr. FITZGERALD.

H.R. 7622 allows small business development centers to disseminate information from the Department of Labor regarding job training programs like apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, as well as other work-based learning opportunities.

Throughout the past year, small businesses have been hit hard by tightening labor markets, often struggling to compete with their larger counterparts. As the recovery continues, unemployment drops, and job openings grow to record heights, the smaller firms in our economy have found it harder than ever to recruit and retain qualified workers.

One of the most effective workforce training methods used in the U.S. today is the registered apprenticeship program, an earn-while-you-learn system that combines classroom instruction with on-the-job training. According to the Department of Labor, the average starting salary for a graduate of an apprenticeship program is \$72,000, and businesses retain these employees at a rate of 92 percent.

Not only do apprenticeships provide a reliable pathway into the middle class for workers, but they also provide top-quality talent to the business that trained them.

With assistance provided by the SBDC network, more small firms will have access to resources to attract and retain high-quality talent, helping them both establish and improve these programs for their businesses while providing training opportunities and job security to workers.

I thank Mr. CROW for leading on this issue with a variety of hearings on the topic and for listening to witnesses as he worked to craft this legislation with Mr. FITZGERALD, Ms. HOULAHAN, and Mr. GARBARINO. These bipartisan efforts will have a lasting impact on our Main Street firms.

I urge Members to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7622, the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022.

Small businesses across the country are facing labor shortages and skills gaps as our Nation remains 820,000 jobs short compared to prior to the pandemic.

Just last week, the NFIB reported that over half of small businesses have unfilled job openings. This is more than double the almost 50-year historical average of 23 percent. Further, of those owners hiring or trying to hire, 92 percent of owners reported few or no

qualified applicants for the positions they were trying to fill.

The Small Business Administration offers multiple resources to small businesses to help them face the current economic headwinds and labor challenges. One of these resources is the small business development centers, which have served to be a valuable tool for entrepreneurs and offer free training, counseling, and support for small businesses.

This legislation will further improve SBDCs by expanding their ability to assist small businesses in establishing and improving work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeship programs.

To be clear, this legislation supports all work-based learning opportunities.

I thank Congressman CROW as well as Congressman FITZGERALD, Congresswoman HOULAHAN, and Congressman GARBARINO for working in a bipartisan manner to ensure this bill reached the House floor. I also thank the chair for advancing this bill.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7622, which was unanimously reported out of our committee. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW).

Mr. CROW. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7622, the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022.

As we help small businesses navigate the labor shortage, it is more important than ever that we support small businesses as they work to find quality workers and fill positions.

I am a huge proponent of work-based learning opportunities like apprenticeships that help small businesses fill job openings and help their workers get the skills they need so they can support their families. Work-based learning opportunities are a great way to attract quality candidates who may not be able to attend traditional education models.

The Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022 aims to empower small business development centers, like the Aurora-South Metro SBDC in my district, to help small businesses establish and improve their apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and job training programs.

This bill would help workers gain the skills they need for in-demand jobs and help small businesses grow their businesses.

I thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ and Ranking Member LUETKEMEYER for bringing this bill to the floor and Representatives FITZGERALD, HOULAHAN, and GARBARINO for their partnership on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 7622.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD), a tireless ad-

vocate for small business in Wisconsin and around the country.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for yielding me time. I thank my colleagues, specifically Mr. CROW, for co-leading H.R. 7622, the Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022.

The bill would allow small business development centers to provide information and assistance to small businesses on how to establish and improve work-based learning opportunities. It also would enhance apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, and other job training programs that many of us are very familiar with.

I hear all the time from Wisconsin small businesses back in my district about how the country's labor shortage is affecting not only the recruitment of skilled employees but, in particular, manufacturing and, in my district, light manufacturing.

The latest National Federation for Independent Businesses' economic trends report showed that while optimism in recovering to prepandemic employment levels is increasing, we still are very much behind the eight ball. Sixty percent of manufacturing firms report unfilled job openings.

Apprenticeships and other job training programs provide a solution to address the needs of the manufacturing sector. Apprenticeships are among the most successful forms of workforce development, and through paid and on-the-job training programs, alongside classroom education, we can make significant strides.

This bill would directly benefit manufacturers and other businesses in Wisconsin's Fifth District by having apprenticeships and other job-training materials readily available to them.

Madam Speaker, I support the passage of this bill.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, the SBDC program has delivered for small businesses for many years. The Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022 will help combat labor shortages by supporting apprenticeships and learning opportunities through SBDCs. This bill will help small businesses grow and equip American workers with new skills.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7622, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, there is no question that small firms are facing the most dire consequences of a tight labor market. At a time when the economy is recovering and businesses are seeking to expand their operations, lack of access to a highly skilled workforce can be frustrating to business owners and harmful to their recovery.

Maintaining economic competitiveness on the world stage means investing in our workforce, and nobody is better equipped to do that than the

small businesses fueling our economic recovery.

H.R. 7622 empowers SBDCs to expand workforce training resources to small employers struggling to find workers, which will, in turn, grow the skill sets of workers and the workforces of businesses.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7622, “The Small Business Workforce Pipeline Act of 2022.”

This bill’s purpose is to amend the Small Business Act requirements relating to apprenticeship program assistance for small business development centers, and other purposes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a labor shortage, that affected businesses in unimaginable ways, especially small businesses. Alarming, 23 percent of small businesses closed due to the pandemic and 20 percent of small businesses that were in their first year of operation also failed.

This is why now, more than ever, small businesses need our support by updating the laws that support them and to encourage apprenticeships.

I support this bill’s effort to establish a clear and concise plan of action for programing and other resources from which small businesses and their employees can benefit.

I am in favor of this legislation because apprenticeships are tangible opportunities for successful workplace development. They enable young workers to gain on-the job training with educational resources that deliver practical experience and skills, equipping them for future career opportunities.

This “learn as you work” style gives access to people who may not be able to pursue traditional educational routes.

Historically, apprenticeships focused on skills for a narrow range of industries that could also benefit from the academic credit and mentorship opportunities. For employers finding a hard time hiring qualified employees, apprenticeships are a direct investment that small businesses realize will successfully impact them.

Madam Speaker, this bill will provide much needed assistance to businesses and enable them to continue their good work of providing training skills that will allow opportunities for employees to succeed in the workplace. This legislation will prepare workers for the 21st century workforce, while helping businesses find the skilled employees they need to compete.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.R. 7622.

SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7622.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2022

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7664) to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to graduates of career and technical education programs or programs of study for small business development centers and women’s business centers, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7664

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Small Business and Career and Technical Education Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

(a) DEFINITION.—Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(gg) CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The term ‘career and technical education’ has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302).”

(b) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.—Section 21(c)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (T), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (v) of the first subparagraph (U) (relating to succession planning), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in second subparagraph (U) (relating to training on domestic and international intellectual property protections)—

(A) in clause (ii)(II), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(B) by redesignating such subparagraph as subparagraph (V); and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(W) assisting small businesses in hiring graduates from career and technical education programs or programs of study; and

“(X) assisting graduates of career and technical education programs or programs of study in starting up a small business concern.”

(c) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTERS.—Section 29(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(4) assistance for small business concerns to hire graduates from career and technical education programs or programs of study; and

“(5) assistance for graduates of career and technical education programs or programs of study to start up a small business concern.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7664, the Supporting Small Business and Career and Technical Education Act of 2022, introduced by my colleague from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and my colleague from Illinois (Ms. NEWMAN).

After seeing massive layoffs in response to the pandemic, businesses are starting to expand their operations and grow their workforce. Unfortunately, this has created one of the tightest labor markets in U.S. history, and small firms are feeling this acutely.

Oftentimes, small businesses are not only faced with a shortage of applicants, but within that pool, they are seeing a shortage of applicants with the skill sets they need.

One of the best strategies for equipping students with skills needed to enter a market is career and technical education, or CTE. Aimed at secondary and postsecondary students, these programs don’t replace academic training but, rather, expand upon it to give young people practical skills they can use, whether they enter the workforce or continue in their studies.

CTE programs can train students with a wide variety of skills in nearly every industry, and this program often works with local businesses to understand what skills are in demand to guide the curriculum.

This legislation directs small business development centers and women’s business centers to assist small businesses in hiring graduates of CTE programs while also helping program graduates start their own businesses.

It takes a twofold approach of, one, creating a more adequate pipeline of trained young people for small businesses and, two, supporting those students who want to launch their own enterprise.

SBDCs and WBCs can help fill the gap between training programs and small firms by building awareness and fostering relationships between the private sector and our educational community.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. WILLIAMS and Ms. NEWMAN for their meaningful work on this bill. I urge Members to support this bipartisan piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1630

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7664, the Supporting Small Business and Career and Technical