

scrutiny, paired with mandated reporting on scoreboard performance, will expose systemic roadblocks and identify best practices.

Our small businesses are more than just economic engines. They are the embodiment of the American spirit, equipped with creativity, resilience, and a fierce determination to succeed. This bill gives them a fighting chance, a seat at the table, and the opportunity to prove themselves on the national stage.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the Agency Accountability Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY), the ranking member of the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Subcommittee.

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Agency Accountability Act. I thank Chairman WILLIAMS, Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, and my colleague from Minnesota, Representative STAUBER, for bringing this important bill forward and getting it to the floor.

As Representative STAUBER said, small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. They are what keep things moving. In Louisville, our small businesses are so special. We have a saying in our small business community that says “Keep Louisville Weird,” meaning make sure our small businesses are here and they are thriving.

One of the reasons I enjoy being on the Small Business Committee is we get together every week, and we talk about what small businesses need and how we can make sure we are helping foster the growth and entrepreneurship that keep America's small businesses moving forward.

When you look at what small businesses need, however, they need a fair shot, among other things. The Federal Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services around the world, so we have recognized that the Federal Government must engage in purchasing things from our small businesses.

Representative STAUBER, a former hockey player, knows a rule isn't any good unless it is enforced. With the Federal Government having a quota, what happens if it doesn't meet it? This bill answers that question, and it says that we must hold failing agencies accountable, that if they aren't meeting their quota of purchasing from small businesses, that they are going to have to come before the House and the Senate and testify as to why.

I am proud to support this bill because it makes sure that we are continuing to support our small businesses all over this country, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Agency Accountability Act.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am

prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I emphasize that this bill specifies that agencies that have not met two or more of their subcategory goals must also testify before our committee.

Each of the categories, including and especially the WOSB program, continue to need additional focus to ensure that the government's acquisition professionals are maximizing contracting opportunities for those small businesses.

Again, I thank the sponsors of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation that will ensure small businesses have access to one of the largest customers in the world, the Federal Government. I thank Congressmen STAUBER and MCGARVEY for working on this legislation that will help our government meet its contracting objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7103.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES REPORTING ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7985) to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to submit to Congress a report on the entrepreneurial challenges facing entrepreneurs with a disability, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7985

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 “Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the challenges that entrepreneurs with a disability encounter with starting and operating a business, including—

(1) an assessment of the challenges and needs of entrepreneurs with a disability;

(2) a description of the resources and support that the Small Business Administration provides to entrepreneurs with a disability;

(3) a description of outreach to entrepreneurs with a disability by the Small Business Administration, including by district and regional offices of the Small Business Administration, small business development centers (as defined in section 3(t) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(t))), and women's business centers (as defined in section 29(a) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 656(a)));

(4) a description of any joint efforts between offices of the Small Business Administration or the Small Business Administration and other Federal agencies to advance the goal of supporting the economic success of entrepreneurs with a disability;

(5) any deficiencies in the resources and support described under paragraph (2);

(6) a description of the use of, and access to, resources of the Administration by entrepreneurs with a disability; and

(7) any recommendations for legislative actions that are necessary to address the challenges or needs of entrepreneurs with a disability that are identified in the report.

(b) COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. 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 bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 7985, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024, introduced by Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO.

This legislation will require the SBA to issue a report to Congress on the challenges individuals with disabilities face when starting a business. Further, it will require the SBA to look at resources across the Federal Government that assist individuals with disabilities.

The Government Accountability Office estimates that there are nearly 50 programs across nine Federal agencies that support employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. However, Federal agencies often fail to coordinate or collaborate on such programs to ensure that their efforts are not duplicated and are working as efficiently as possible. The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act of 2024 will require the SBA to look at this fragmented system and do its part to consolidate and streamline those efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO for their

leadership on this important issue and for introducing this bill. I urge a “yes” vote on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today we are considering H.R. 7985, which would require the SBA to submit a report to Congress on the challenges facing entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Despite progress to increase employment rates, only 26 percent of people with disabilities participate in the labor force. That is why we need a comprehensive study to assess the resources that are available to people with disabilities, examine their effectiveness, and determine what actions need to be taken to support entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of Mr. MCGARVEY and Mr. MOLINARO to increase opportunities for people with disabilities. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7985. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from the State of New York (Mr. MOLINARO).

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 7985, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act, which I am very proud to co-lead alongside my colleague, Representative MCGARVEY. I am grateful for his leadership and commitment to move the legislation forward and also to address an important need in our communities across this country.

This bipartisan bill will provide much-needed clarity for our entrepreneurs with disabilities as they navigate the SBA's complex maze of over 50 different programs geared to support individuals with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities as they start a business.

As of April 2022, 74 percent of adults with disabilities work outside the traditional workforce. Approximately 1.8 million of these adults with disabilities were businessowners themselves.

From limited access to affordable capital to a scarcity of supports and services tailored to their unique needs, the SBA needs to step up and, frankly, provide much greater support in working to consolidate this fractured and complex system.

Entrepreneurs of every ability should have a fair shot at pursuing their passion. As chair of the Small Business Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development, I remain committed, as I know my colleague, Mr. MCGARVEY, does, to empowering our entrepreneurs with disabilities to contribute more to Main Street and lead more independent lives.

The absence of adequate reporting data on entrepreneurs with disabilities renders this eager and highly competent community to the sidelines. The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Re-

porting Act would provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of our entrepreneurs with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities and help inform lawmakers of legislative solutions to address the challenges these individuals face in order to break down barriers so they can pursue their own employment options and create opportunities to owning their own businesses.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank Representative MORGAN MCGARVEY for his partnership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation, and I look forward to continuing to show America what it means to think differently, breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for every individual of every ability.

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Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY).

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act.

I think too often the outside focus on this body is on what isn't working. There isn't enough attention paid to when things come together and when it works the way it should.

I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for their support. I especially thank Chairman MOLINARO, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce, for his courage and compassion in personally navigating the maze of people who face intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We had a subcommittee hearing, and Chairman MOLINARO brought up Maeve, a young woman from New York, talking about her coffee shop. I brought up Cody Clark from Louisville, a truly inspiring young man who not only is an entrepreneur who told us about his experience, but I think he performed the first-ever magic trick in front of the Small Business Committee this year to highlight his point of what we can accomplish.

This bill helps ensure that every American—every American—has the opportunity to become that type of successful entrepreneur. After all, isn't that the fundamental promise of the American Dream, that any person in this country can work hard, take risks, and hopefully find success?

What we highlighted in this hearing and through the stories of Maeve and Cody and others is that Americans with disabilities, like other underprivileged groups, see fewer opportunities to make this dream a reality.

In fact, 74 percent of people with disabilities do not participate in our Nation's labor force. Too many barriers—both physical and intangible—block their way to joining the workforce or starting a business. The Federal Gov-

ernment must do more to help break those down.

To do that, we have to better understand what these challenges are, and this bill takes a really important first step in that process. It will require the Small Business Administration to submit a report to Congress on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs with disabilities. This report will assess the entrepreneurs' challenges and needs, detail the resources the SBA currently provides, and recommend what actions we can take to improve how the Small Business Administration serves entrepreneurs with disabilities.

The better Congress understands these challenges, the easier it will be to knock them down to take these barriers away and make sure every American has the chance to succeed.

I again thank Chairman WILLIAMS, Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, Chairman MOLINARO, and everyone else involved for their leadership and support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7985.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Entrepreneurship provides people with disabilities a viable option to participate in the labor force and improve their quality of life.

SBA's entrepreneurial ecosystem, comprised of nearly 1,000 resource partners across the country, can provide individuals with free counseling and training to launch and grow their small businesses.

We do not know how well SBA and its resource partners are meeting their needs and what more could be done to better serve these individuals. This bill will go a long way in assessing the outreach and engagement provided by SBA and make legislative recommendations to address any deficiencies in the services provided to people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mr. MCGARVEY and Mr. MOLINARO for their bipartisan efforts, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have held hearings this year that have highlighted the great work of disabled entrepreneurs across the country. I thank Representatives MCGARVEY and MOLINARO again for offering this solution to ensure the government is working efficiently to offer these individuals the resources that are already available.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7985.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PLAIN LANGUAGE IN CONTRACTING ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7987) to require plain language and the inclusion of key words in covered notices that are clear, concise, and accessible to small business concerns, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7987

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 "Plain Language in Contracting Act".

SEC. 2. ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY IN COVERED NOTICES FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each covered notice shall be written—

(1) in a manner that is clear, concise, and accessible to a small business concern; and

(2) in a manner consistent, to the extent practicable, with the Federal plain language guidelines established pursuant to the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301 note).

(b) INCLUSION OF KEY WORDS IN COVERED NOTICES.—Each covered notice shall, to the maximum extent practicable, include key words in the description of the covered notice such that a small business concern seeking contract opportunities using the single governmentwide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code, can easily identify and understand such covered notice.

(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue rules to carry out this section.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED NOTICE.—The term "covered notice" means a notice pertaining to small business concerns published by a Federal agency on the single Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms "Federal agency" and "small business concern" have the meanings given those terms, respectively, in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, introduced by Representatives LALOTA and THANEDAR.

Far too often, the government uses language that is difficult to understand when it solicits contract opportunities. No one feels the burden of this government-speak more than small business owners looking to break into the Federal marketplace.

We have heard from small business owners about how their limited resources often prevent them from employing a team of attorneys to sift through government solicitations to interpret what the government is actually trying to purchase. One entrepreneur even told our committee that they examined thousands of government contracts, and only 3 percent were written in a way that someone without a college degree could understand.

The number of small businesses contracting with the government has been shrinking for years. We consistently hear that the barriers to entry are simply too high.

H.R. 7987 will finally remove this barrier facing small businesses by forcing the government to take commonsense action and write contract solicitations using simple and plain language.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill, which states that certain contracting documents should be written in a way that is "clear, concise, and accessible" for small businesses.

This bill is an attempt to reduce confusion and add clarity for some small firms that contract with or are looking to contract with the Federal Government.

While we have concerns about how elements of this legislation could be implemented, simplifying the contracting process and recruiting new entrants into the Federal marketplace are priorities that we share. There are certainly ways for the government to improve in both of those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's small businesses from Long Island and throughout our great country should not need an attorney on staff or a compliance department to apply for and win a Federal contract.

That is why I have introduced the Plain Language in Contracting Act,

which is aimed at simplifying the process for small businesses to secure government contracts.

I extend my gratitude to my colleague, Representative THANEDAR of Michigan, for co-leading this crucial legislation across party lines, and to the skipper, Chairman WILLIAMS, and his diligent staff for seeing to it that this bill got to the floor today.

With over 33 million small businesses in America, only a very small fraction win Federal contracts. Many entrepreneurs cite the complexity of government procurement processes as a major deterrent.

The language used in contract solicitations is often ambiguous and unnecessarily complex, deterring small businesses from even attempting to bid on a contract.

A study by the Naval Postgraduate School revealed that less than 3 percent of Department of Defense contract solicitations are written in plain English. This complexity drives small businesses away from Federal contracting, eroding competition and harming our economy.

My bill mandates Federal agencies to use clear language in contract solicitations, fostering greater accessibility to contract bids for small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation recognizing the pivotal role small businesses play in our Nation's economy. Together, let's pave the way for a more accessible Federal contracting process for all small businesses. Doing so benefits small businesses, the Federal Government, and all of our taxpayers.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. THANEDAR).

Mr. THANEDAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7987, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, which I am co-leading with Representative NICK LALOTA of New York. I applaud Representative LALOTA's leadership, and it is a pleasure to work with him on this bipartisan bill.

I am also, as an entrepreneur, delighted and excited to be working on the Small Business Committee led so well by Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ.

Having experienced the challenges of running a small business, I recognize the urgent need to cut through the jargon of bureaucracy and provide clear, concise, and accessible information to our Nation's small business owners.

This bill would require all notices related to small business concerns to comply with the Federal plain language guidelines established by the Plain Writing Act of 2010, reflecting our core values of transparency, efficiency, and unwavering dedication to fostering a level playing field for all businesses, regardless of size.

By including key words and sticking to the Federal plain language guidelines, we are not just drafting legislation. We are empowering small businesses to navigate the complexity of