

I congratulate Samuel and Saul Maldonado and SAMES.

CONGRESS SHOULD REMAIN IN D.C. UNTIL BUDGET IS DONE

(Mr. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, every year since 1996, Congress has failed to pass our annual spending bills on time. Every year since 1996, despite work still left to be done, August rolls around and Congress goes home, kicking the can down the road and leaving funding for our Federal Government to another day.

Mr. Speaker, let's fix how Washington works and remain in D.C. until our budget work is done and completed this year.

We must fix how Washington works. That is why I am introducing the Do Our Job Act. If our work is not done, we must not go home in August. Let's show the American people that we are serious about reducing our debt and keeping our government running.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OBERNOLTE). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1530

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MALOY) at 3 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

SMALL BUSINESS PROCUREMENT AND UTILIZATION REFORM ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7988) to amend the Small Business Act to include requirements relating to new small business entrants in the scorecard program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7988

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 Procurement and Utilization Reform Act of 2024" or the "SPUR Act".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS TO SCORECARD REQUIREMENTS.

Section 15(y) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(y)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraph (E) as subparagraph (F); and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraph:

"(E) The number of new small business entrants, including new small business entrants that are small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and small business concerns owned and controlled by women awarded prime contracts in each North American Industry Classification System code during the fiscal year, and a comparison to the number awarded prime contracts during the prior fiscal year, if available.";

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking "subparagraphs (B) through (E) of paragraph (2)" and inserting "subparagraphs (B) through (F) of paragraph (2)"; and

(3) by amending paragraph (6) to read as follows:

"(6) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

"(A) NEW SMALL BUSINESS ENTRANT.—The term 'new small business entrant' means a small business concern that—

"(i) has been awarded a prime contract; and

"(ii) has not previously been awarded a prime contract by the Federal Government.

"(B) SCORECARD.—The term 'scorecard' means any summary using a rating system to evaluate the efforts of a Federal agency to meet goals established under subsection (g)(1)(B) that—

"(i) includes the measures described in paragraph (2); and

"(ii) assigns a score to each Federal agency evaluated."

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. 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 bill.

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

There was no objection.

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. 7988, the Small Business Procurement and Utilization Reform Act of 2024, also known as the SPUR Act, sponsored by Representatives STAUBER and PEREZ.

Small businesses are vital to the health and resiliency of America's in-

dustrial base. Broad and robust small business participation ensures that America can continue to lead the world in innovation and defend us against foreign adversaries. However, small businesses are getting squeezed out of the industrial base at a staggering rate, a direct threat to America's dominance.

There are just half as many small businesses participating in the industrial base as there were just a decade ago. This downward trend is a culmination of years of bad government policy and is being made worse by the Biden administration's regulatory onslaught, dissuading small businesses from even considering participating in the Federal marketplace.

The SPUR Act is a critical step into looking under the hood of the government and bringing accountability to agencies. By grading agencies on how many contracts have been awarded to small businesses for the very first time, we will bring together a great focus on reversing the declining participation of small businesses in the industrial base.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for H.R. 7988, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Today, we are considering H.R. 7988, which requires SBA to consider new small business government contractors when grading a Federal agency's performance toward meeting its small business goals.

The government has roughly 40 percent fewer small businesses in the ecosystem than it did just a decade ago. This has been an ongoing challenge the committee has identified and sought solutions to reverse because the industrial base decline has produced negative consequences for both the government and small firms alike.

Small firms lose out on the stability government contracting can provide, and the government loses out on the innovation and competition that a larger base of small businesses provides. Yet, despite this decline, Federal agencies award a record amount of contracting dollars to small businesses each year. This means fewer small businesses are getting larger contracts, and since contracts are getting larger, fewer smalls are willing and able to compete for them.

This legislation is a productive step that will help break that cycle. I commend Mr. STAUBER and Ms. PEREZ for their work to craft a solution to this challenge.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of my bill, the Small Business Procurement and Utilization Reform Act of 2024, also known as the SPUR Act.

Madam Speaker, I also thank my friend and colleague from Washington (Ms. PEREZ) for her support on this important legislation.

Small businesses across the United States have a problem. Despite government agencies setting aside contract opportunities for small businesses, participation in Federal contracting has plummeted by 50 percent over just the past decade.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are the innovators, the job creators, and the driving force behind economic growth.

In Minnesota, small businesses account for over 99 percent of all businesses and employ over half of the workforce. It is no exaggeration to say that the success of our economy is tied to the success of our small businesses.

The Federal Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world, and there is no better way for the government to support small businesses than to ensure they have every opportunity to contract with it.

The scorecard system, which is used to determine if the government is doing a good job contracting with small businesses, needs improvement. Agencies are graded on the total number and value of small business contracts, yet they do not factor in small businesses who won a Federal contract for the first time.

Without incorporating this into the agency scorecard grade, we have no ability to tell whether the pool of small businesses are first-time contractors or multiyear contractors. If the government continuously rewards the same firms time and time again, a new small business that has a more efficient, less expensive way of doing things may be discouraged from entering the marketplace altogether.

My bill, the SPUR Act, addresses this concern. It will require the SBA to account for the number of new entrants into the Federal procurement space when it grades agencies for use in its scorecard. Too many Federal agencies fall short of their goals for awarding contracts to small businesses, leaving billions of dollars in contracts out of reach of American small businesses and increasing the cost for taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the SPUR Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. PEREZ), the cosponsor of the legislation.

Ms. PEREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the SPUR Act. I thank my colleague from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) for introducing this bill.

The SBA is ensuring that small businesses are given a fair shot at competing for Federal contracting dollars. SBA publishes an annual small business procurement scorecard that grades each Federal agency on their spending toward the goal and gives agencies a score for their performance.

We all know that these Federal contracts can be an incredible financial opportunity for our Nation's entrepreneurs, but even though the amount of dollars awarded to small businesses has reached record highs, the number of small businesses in the industrial base has declined dramatically.

Put simply, the Federal Government is not retaining current small business government contractors, and new small businesses are not choosing to enter the Federal market. This is a serious problem.

For our local economies to thrive, it is important that we level the playing field and ensure that more southwest Washington small businesses can benefit from these opportunities. This bill would require the SBA to include the number of new entrants into the Federal market in the methodology for scoring each Federal agency's small business performance.

By way of example, after the 2020 pandemic hit, my husband and I spent basically the better part of a year on upgrades to our auto shop, including investments in infrastructure, like ventilation systems to keep our employees and our customers safe.

Our friends, who own another auto repair shop, instead spent the entire year learning how to navigate the contract system with the city. This is a perfect example of how it is a real loss to our communities and our local economies when small business owners have to spend a year navigating a bureaucracy and figuring out how to do business with the government.

Our bill will help shed light on how successful Federal agencies are at making sure that new businesses see the value in contracting with the Federal Government and have the capacity to overcome the regulatory burdens to tap into these resources.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to co-lead this bill with Representative STAUBER, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Madam Speaker, at the Department of Defense, GAO found that, over a 10-year period, the number of small businesses participating in the defense industrial base declined by over 40 percent. The civilian agencies are seeing a similar decline.

As a result, questions have been raised about how to accurately measure the health of the industrial base and the scorecard's effectiveness for tracking small business contracting. The scorecard's current criteria include a year-over-year prime contract comparison goal, but it fails to count the award of a contract for the first time.

This bill is intended to measure and include in the SBA's methodology for calculating an agency's score for small business goals the number of small businesses who are becoming Federal Government contractors for the first time.

By requiring a year-over-year comparison of new entrants rather than a single target, Federal agencies will be compelled to continuously focus on bringing in new companies and addressing the barriers, like contract size, that prevent greater small business participation.

I again applaud the work put into this legislation. It is a thoughtful product of bipartisan work.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. STAUBER and Ms. PEREZ, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, we must ensure that a greater number of small businesses are entering the government contracting space. By forcing agencies to recognize the shortcomings in awarding contracts to first-time suppliers of the Federal Government, I am hopeful that these numbers will begin to move back in the right direction.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense 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. 7988.

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.

ThinkDIFFERENTLY ABOUT DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7989) to provide for a memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the National Council on Disability to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7989

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 "ThinkDIFFERENTLY About Disability Employment Act".

SEC. 2. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Small Business Administration, in consultation with the Chair of the National Council on Disability, shall—

(1) provide assistance to individuals with disabilities who desire to become entrepreneurs or to be self-employed;

(2) help individuals with disabilities find employment at small business concerns (as defined under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632));