

In July, Inspector General Ware testified that his office has received 250,000 hotline complaints since the beginning of the pandemic, and more than 90,000 have been identified as actionable. This amounts to more than 100 years of investigative casework.

To that end, the single most important action we can take to support the OIG is to make sure we give them the resources they need to investigate bad actors.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of Ms. VAN DUYNE and Mr. LANDSMAN to curb fraud, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE).

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support of this legislation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Small Business Administration oversaw what has been described as “the biggest fraud in a generation,” doling out more than \$200 billion to scammers, foreign crime rings, and others who took advantage of a pandemic to enrich themselves.

According to the Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz, the SBA invited this fraud by failing to implement basic safeguards to ensure taxpayer funds were going to the right people. Some of the pandemic aid even went to people involved in transnational crime organizations.

When government mandates forced small businesses to close their doors, some resulting in permanent closures, fraudsters were out taking expensive vacations, buying Lamborghinis, mansions, private jets, horses, luxury jewelry, and more, all on the taxpayers’ dime. While we work to recover the stolen funds, those criminals must be identified and prosecuted.

The Small Business Administration not only failed to implement safeguards to prevent fraud of this scope, but they also failed to comply with the law originally authorizing the aid, which required the agency to include an easily accessible link for the public to report suspected fraud. Instead, the SBA has ignored legal requirements and made it incredibly difficult to report fraud.

As my colleagues and I highlighted during a hearing last year, if you were even able to locate the SBA’s link to report fraudulent COVID-19 loans—which were buried in their website—where did it take you? As our chairman noted, it took you to a different website that was written entirely in Spanish.

The Republican-led Small Business Committee has created a direct link for Americans to easily report pandemic fraud, and the Small Business Administration must do the same.

I urge my colleagues to support our bipartisan legislation to make it easier to report pandemic fraud.

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

Over the past 3 years, this committee has played an important role in examining the pandemic relief programs, which helped millions of small businesses stay afloat in unprecedented times.

While there may be disagreement on the actual estimates of fraud, it is clear we need to work together to protect the integrity of the SBA programs from bad actors.

The SBA, under the leadership of Administrator Guzman, has taken strong steps to root out fraud in the pandemic relief programs and put strong controls in place to prevent future fraud.

In 2022, SBA established a Fraud Risk Management Board, aligning its practices with GAO’s oversight policies.

A new role was also created, the SBA Special Counsel for Enterprise Risk, to advise the administrator of fraud and risk management activities.

The agency continues to work collaboratively with the SBA Inspector General, the Interagency COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force, and the Department of Justice to recover stolen funds.

I thank Ms. VAN DUYNE and Mr. LANDSMAN for looking for ways to enhance the work that the SBA is undertaking to combat fraud, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Congresswoman VAN DUYNE and Congressman LANDSMAN, 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. 5426.

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. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### THE WOSB INTEGRITY ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7128) to establish requirements relating to size standard compliance of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7128

*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 “The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024”.

#### SEC. 2. WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SIZE STANDARD COMPLIANCE FOR RESTRICTED COMPETITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8(m)(2)(E) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)(E)) is amended by inserting “, including that each such concern does not exceed the applicable size standard established under section 3(a)” after “by women”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not be construed as disqualifying any small business concern owned and controlled by women that, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, is certified by a Federal agency, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, or a national certifying entity approved by the Administrator as a small business concern owned and controlled by women from competing for contracts restricted under section 8(m)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)) before the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the small business concern owned and controlled by women submits a notice that such concern is no longer a small business concern owned and controlled by women; or

(2) the date on which the Administrator, Federal agency, or entity that provided such certification determines that the concern exceeds the applicable size standard established under section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to require the Administrator to perform a formal size determination on a small business concern when considering an application from such concern for certification as a small business concern owned and controlled by women.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term “small business concern” has the meaning given under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(3) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY WOMEN.—The term “small business concern” and “small business concern owned and controlled by women” has the meaning given in section 8(m)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(1)).

(e) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 8(m)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)(C)) is amended by striking “paragraph (3)” and inserting “paragraph (4)”.

(f) 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.

□ 1745

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. 7128, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024, sponsored by Representative MALOY from the great State of Utah.

The WOSB Integrity Act removes self-certification of size from this contracting program that is reserved for women-owned small businesses.

It is vital that there are programs to help small business owners access Federal contracting opportunities. That is where the Small Business Administration's women-owned small business program, also known as WOSB, comes in. This program allows women entrepreneurs to compete for unique contracting opportunities.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government currently does not independently verify that these businesses are truly small businesses. Firms can simply self-certify themselves as small businesses, potentially leading to misrepresentation and fraud to obtain contracting opportunities.

It is vital that women-owned entrepreneurs who participate in the WOSB do not have to worry that their competitors misrepresent themselves as a small business.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7128, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024, 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, Representatives Maloy and Scholten, for their work on this bill.

Since its inception, the WOSB program and the administration of the program have been a challenge for SBA. Similarly, Federal agencies have faced challenges using the authorities that Congress has put in place to streamline contracting with women-owned small businesses.

While working to boost participation of WOSBs and enhance the use of these authorities, Congress must also advance initiatives that are designed to protect the integrity of the program.

One issue we are addressing today is the inspector general's report that states there is a discrepancy in SBA's implementation of the program. The purpose of this bill is to align SBA processes with the IG's report and to clarify that we expect SBA to have a process similar to the other socioeconomic contracting programs for WOSB certifications.

Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate my colleagues for their work on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY).

Ms. MALOY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for yielding me time. I also thank Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for her support on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024.

The purpose of this bill is to make sure that the businesses that are taking advantage of the WOSB program are, in fact, small businesses. They are certifying that they are women-owned, but they are self-certifying that they are small.

The SBA inspector general found that there is room for fraud in this program, so this is simply a commonsense solution to close a loophole to make sure this program is serving the purpose it was intended to serve, which is giving women-owned small businesses the opportunity to compete in Federal contracting. It encourages fair competition, levels the playing field in government contracting, and ensures the opportunities are awarded justly and contribute to a competitive small business sector.

We have a goal of awarding 5 percent of government contracts to women-owned small businesses. We have no way of knowing how well we are doing in meeting that goal if we don't have any way of certifying that these WOSBs are, in fact, small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and I thank Ms. MALOY and Ms. SCHOLTEN for this legislation.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Congresswoman MALOY and SCHOLTEN, 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. 7128.

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. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7102) to establish an Office of Native American Affairs within the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7102

*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 “Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act”.

#### SEC. 2. OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 49 (15 U.S.C. 631 note) as section 50; and

(2) by inserting after section 48 (15 U.S.C. 657u) the following:

#### “SEC. 49. OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Assistant Administrator’ means the Assistant Administrator for Native American Affairs appointed under subsection (c).

“(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning given the term ‘Indian tribe’ in section 8(a)(13).

“(3) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘Native Hawaiian Organization’ has the meaning given the term in section 8(a)(15).

“(4) OFFICE.—The term ‘Office’ means the Office of Native American Affairs described in this section.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the Administration the Office of Native American Affairs, which shall be responsible for establishing a working relationship with Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations by targeting programs of the Administration relating to entrepreneurial development, contracting, and capital access to—

“(A) establish or expand small business concerns owned and controlled by individuals who are members of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations; and

“(B) promote economic development in Indian country (as defined in section 1151 of title 18, United States Code).

“(2) CONNECTION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—To the extent reasonable, the Office shall educate Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations about programs administered by other Federal agencies related to the interests described in paragraph (1).

“(c) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The Office shall be headed by an Assistant Administrator for Native American Affairs, who shall—

“(1) be appointed by and report to the Administrator;

“(2) have knowledge of Native American cultures and experience providing culturally tailored small business development assistance to Native Americans;

“(3) provide assistance to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations and small business concerns owned and controlled by individuals who are members of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations;

“(4) formulate policies, and promote policies and existing programs, to better address the entrepreneurial, capital access, business development, and contracting needs of persons described in paragraph (3);

“(5) collaborate with Associate Administrators within the Administration and officials of other Federal agencies to develop policies and plans to implement programs of the Administration to holistically address the needs described in paragraph (4);

“(6) provide assistance, including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other financial assistance, to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations, or to private