

Testimony

Rep. Tony Cárdenas

As a previous small business owner and Engineer, I understand the important role small businesses have in every community. During my 22 years as an elected official, and my time here in Congress, I have dedicated my career to ensuring that small businesses are equipped with skilled workers and are provided with incentives to help them grow, while also addressing the unnecessary regulations that slow down small businesses and their opportunity to prosper. Last week, and with the support of over 50 of my colleagues, I led House Resolution 360 to honor the vital role of small business and the passion of entrepreneurs in the United States.

Improving success among women and minority-owned small businesses in the United States is a major priority. According to a study by the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, about 4.4 million Latino-owned small businesses in the U.S. contribute more than \$700 billion to the economy annually, \$700 Billion. The report highlights Latino-owned companies which have grown 31.6 percent since 2012, more than double the growth rate of all businesses across America.

The U.S. Small Business Administration released its [report](#) in August 2018 noting that in 2012, there were 9.9 million women-owned firms, and 2.5 million firms owned equally by men and women. This means that 12.3 million firms, or 45 percent of all classified firms, were at least 50 percent women-owned.

Additionally, California small businesses employ half or 7 million of the state's private workforce in 2018 and created over 280,000 net new jobs in 2015. The biggest gain was in firms employing fewer than 20 employees.

The achievements of Latino and women-owned small businesses are impressive when you consider it is often difficult for them to gain access to capital. Yet they are making progress.

My district in California, the San Fernando Valley, is home to an array of small businesses, including aerospace, Hollywood Studio Soundstages and backlots, and engineering to name a few. I've had the opportunity to visit and tour dozens of manufacturing companies in the San Fernando Valley and throughout the Los Angeles region. Through the Small Business and Manufacturing Roundtables I've held in my district, and the guidance from my Manufacturing Advisory Board, I've had the opportunity to hear first-hand from the business owners in and around my district. I was proud to be a part of the group that led Southern California representatives in helping create access to a pool of \$1.3 billion in federal development assistance for the region through the federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

This session, I encourage the Committee's consideration to bridge the skill gap between the available workforce and employers by investing in funding programs that will encourage the development of computer science career education programs that meet the market needs of employers and better integrate secondary and post-secondary education. Furthermore, I ask the Committee to consider legislation that promotes reforms in workforce education and skills training for American Manufacturing jobs, as well as, promotes innovation and entrepreneurship of Latino and Women-owned businesses which continue to be a positive and powerful driving force in our country's economy. Lastly, I urge the

Committee to invest in targeted initiatives that develop and expand networks that can help women and minority business owners access needed resources such as financial capital, skill development training and mentorship programs which have a critical role in improving the economic performance of women and minority entrepreneurs.

Thank you.