

Minority Views
H.R. 7104, The National SBDC Advisory Board Improvement Act

The Small Business Development Centers Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-302) established Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to provide free counseling, training, and resources to small businesses. SBDCs operate in partnership with higher education institutions and state governments. Previously, the Small Business Administration (SBA) had been operating the technical assistance program directly or through third party partners. The Small Business Development Centers Act of 1980 Act also established the National Small Business Development Center Advisory Board to provide advice and counsel to the SBA Administrator and the Associate Administrator for Small Business Development Centers.

The National Small Business Development Center Advisory Board is comprised of nine members appointed by the Administrator who are “sympathetic to small business needs.” Not more than three of the Board Members are from universities and the remaining six are from small businesses or associations. Board Members serve three-year terms, and one one-third of the Board changes every year. The Board is required to meet semi-annually.

The Board has met regularly over the years to discuss a wide range of issues, including but not limited to the Administration’s priorities, SBDC annual plan, outreach and engagement with state directors, the ASBDC annual conference, and cybersecurity issues. The legislation would require the SBDC Advisory Board to submit an annual report to Congress on their SBA activities and make recommendations to improve the program. This information would be valuable to the Members on the Small Business Committee.

With that said, it is imperative for the Committee to review the entrepreneurial development programs and make improvements to better meet the needs of small business owners. As the former Chair of the Committee, I made certain we reauthorized the programs in the 116th and 117th Congress in a bipartisan manner, and all the bills passed the House of Representatives unanimously. I look forward to working with the Chairman to mark-up those entrepreneurial development reauthorization bills in the coming months.



Sincerely,

Nydia M. Velázquez
Ranking Member