



Statement
for the record
C. E. “Tee” Rowe
June 4, 2024

Committee on Small Business
US House of Representatives

“Weaponizing Federal Resources:
Exposing the SBA’s Voter Registration Efforts”

Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Velazquez, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this statement regarding the US Small Business Administration's Voter Registration MOU (3/19/24) with the Michigan Secretary of State's office.

I am the President and CEO of America's SBDC, the Association that represents the nationwide small business development center (SBDC) system of 63 networks with over 900 locations and over 2,500 dedicated professional counselors, advisors, specialists and support staff.

For over 43 years SBDCs have been providing services to small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. Over the years our member networks have developed a wide variety of services for small businesses, services that are tailored to meet the needs of businesses throughout the nation. However, one thing we don't do is offer voter registration assistance.

When the SBA signed the MOU with the Michigan Secretary of State, the Michigan SBDC network had no part of it, nor will it. While SBDCs hold events all the time, (since June 1, 2023 the Michigan SBDC has hosted 66 in-person and 119 on-line events) these events don't offer voter registration. These are events such as "Starting a Business", "Introduction to AI" or "Writing a Business Plan".

Over the years SBDCs have hosted and attended events with SBA Administrators and other officials from every Administration, from Nixon to Biden. They do that because SBA is their partner, just as universities, banks, and economic development groups are our partners. SBDCs do not attend or support political events.

SBDCs want to focus on what we do best, helping small businesses get started, access capital, grow, create jobs, and remain resilient in the face of economic challenges and disasters. The things SBDCs do best.

Thank you.