

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Kelly L. Loeffler
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Loeffler:

We write to you to express concerns regarding your recent actions regarding the National Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Advisory Board and Regional Regulatory Fairness Boards. We are particularly concerned about the termination of Ms. Adria Bagshaw and Ms. Melissa Florio in the middle of their terms without explanation and urge that you reinstate them immediately to their positions.

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program's stated mission is to "promote entrepreneurship, small business growth and the U.S. economy." The SBDC Advisory Board plays a critical role in overseeing the SBDC program, evaluating its effectiveness and offering proposals to improve it. As you likely know, the SBDC Advisory Board is mandated by statute, under Section 21 of the Small Business Act.¹ The statute states that the board shall consist of nine members, "who shall be persons of outstanding qualifications known to be familiar and sympathetic with small business needs and problems" and further outlines board appointees' term lengths.

Adria Bagshaw, Vice President & Co-owner of W.H. Bagshaw Company, Inc. a precision manufacturing company in Nashua, NH, was appointed to a three-year term on the SBDC Advisory Board that was set to conclude in August 2026. Her company has benefited from the SBDC program's guidance, resources, and strategic advising over its 150-year history. Given her company's longstanding interactions with the SBDC program, she was and would remain an asset to the SBDC Advisory Board. However, she recently received a letter from your agency announcing her immediate, early termination as part of your initiative to "reconstitute all boards."

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) was passed in 1996 to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses and give them more of a voice in the development of new federal regulations. Among the provisions of SBREFA was the creation of ten Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards, which would each have five small business representatives to advise the SBA on "matters of concern to small businesses relating to the enforcement activities of agencies."²

Melissa Florio, President of Ambix Manufacturing, a plastics engineering and manufacturing company in Albany, NH, was also appointed to a three-year term in 2023,³ and has served on the Region One Regulatory Fairness Board ably. Despite starting Ambix during the Great Recession, she has helped it grow to compete to provide services and custom manufacturing both domestically and abroad. Unfortunately, she received a virtually identical letter ending her term on the Regulatory Fairness Board early.

These terminations leave these boards dramatically understaffed. The SBDC Advisory Board is required to have nine members – but now has only two. Similarly, the Regional Regulatory Fairness Boards had 37 members less than two years ago⁴ but now have only five.⁵ Concerningly, it is our understanding that not all existing members of the SBDC received early termination letters. Further, if reshoring manufacturing jobs remains a priority for the Administration—a

¹ 15 U.S.C. § 648

² 15 U.S.C. § 657

³ <https://www.sba.gov/article/2023/09/29/sba-announces-17-new-members-holds-regulatory-fairness-board-meeting>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://www.sba.gov/priorities/councils-and-committees/regional-regulatory-fairness-boards>

priority that we share—it would be well served by allowing Ms. Bagshaw and Ms. Florio to continue advising on how best to support small domestic manufacturers on these boards.

Above all, we are concerned that the sudden decision, made without Congressional notification or any public justification, harms small businesses across the country, who benefit from having local small businesses with a voice at the SBA.

Accordingly, we write to seek additional information about this decision.

- 1). Could you explain why Ms. Bagshaw’s and Ms. Florio’s appointments were terminated early and what criteria the SBA used to reach this decision?
- 2). Was the SBA’s decision-making process applied fairly to all existing members of these boards?
- 3). How did the SBA consult with local small businesses and SBDCs prior to making this decision?
- 4). Given this disruption in the small businesses’ representation in federal policymaking, how does your administration plan to ensure small businesses can share input on SBDC operations and federal regulatory and enforcement actions that could have a significant impact on their businesses?
- 5). Can you commit to Congressional notification regarding SBA actions moving forward?

Again, we urge you to reverse course and allow Ms. Bagshaw and Ms. Florio to complete their service as planned. We look forward to your timely responses to the questions above and to working with you to support our nation’s small business in the 119th Congress.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress