



Statement for the Record

On behalf of

Workplace Solutions Association

Before the

**U.S. House Committee on Small Business
Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure**

“Leveling the Playing Field: Fostering Opportunities for Small Business Contractors”

Chairman LaLota, Ranking Member Cisneros, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Workplace Solutions Association (WSA) and the thousands of small independent businesses in the office products industry we represent across the country, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the hearing record.

Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are more than 33 million small businesses in the United States—accounting for 99.9% of all U.S. businesses and employing over 61 million Americans. These businesses not only drive innovation and job creation but also contribute more than 40% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. They are the engines of economic opportunity in every congressional district.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the federal procurement system, where small businesses have historically played a critical role in delivering cost-effective, high-quality goods and services to agencies across government. Yet, this vital sector is under increasing threat as the rules of procurement evolve and large, multinational corporations begin to dominate the landscape.

We commend this Committee for holding today’s hearing and for your continued focus on fostering opportunities for small business contractors. We also strongly support recent guidance and efforts initiated by President Trump to improve federal procurement policies and systems. His business-minded approach to government reform—particularly in modernizing the General Services Administration (GSA) and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)—is long overdue and essential to reducing waste and fraud, improving government efficiency, and expanding opportunities for small businesses.



However, while we welcome these reforms, we are also deeply concerned that certain changes, if not carefully implemented, may inadvertently put small businesses at risk. There is growing fear within our community that these efforts—if overly tilted in favor of large, multinational corporations—could shut the door on small businesses' ability to serve the federal government altogether. The result would not only be the loss of federal contracts, but potentially the closure of long-standing small businesses that have been dedicated public sector partners for decades.

As federal procurement evolves, we must ensure that small businesses are not forced to compete against global giants like Amazon and Walmart in sectors—such as office supplies—where small businesses have traditionally thrived. No small business can compete on price alone with multi-billion-dollar corporations operating at massive scale. Without targeted protections and balanced policies, small firms risk being crowded out of the marketplace.

As the Committee examines how to create a fair and level playing field, we respectfully urge Congress to ensure that small business voices are at the forefront of any reform effort. In particular, we ask the Committee to take the following critical actions:

1. Preserve and Strengthen Small Business Contracting Requirements

Federal agencies must not be allowed to sidestep small business contracting goals through marketplace pilot programs or reform initiatives. Any change to federal procurement systems must preserve longstanding small business participation requirements, not undermine them. We must ensure small businesses are not forced to compete against trillion-dollar conglomerates for basic office supplies, facility products, and other routine goods—areas where small businesses have long delivered exceptional value and service.

2. Prohibit Online Marketplace Providers from Selling Their Own Products on Government Platforms They Operate

Congress must prohibit any online platform provider from using its role as a government platform host to gain an unfair advantage by selling its own products. Allowing companies to both manage the platform and compete on it creates an inherent conflict of interest, undermines fair competition, and threatens the viability of small business contractors. This model enables platform hosts to prioritize their own products and gain access to competitors' proprietary data—giving them an unfair advantage in pricing, delivery, and customer access.

3. Require Full and Open Competition in Awarding Online Marketplace Contracts

Current GSA procurement practices for awarding online marketplace contracts circumvent full and open competition—granting awards through opaque, non-competitive methods. Congress must require that all platform hosting contracts be awarded through a transparent and competitive bidding process that adheres to federal procurement principles. Fair competition ensures the best value for taxpayers and opens the door to more diverse small business participation.



4. Establish an Industry Advisory Group for Online Marketplaces

To ensure that future procurement platforms meet the intent of Congress and adapt to evolving technology and market dynamics, we urge Congress to require GSA to establish an Industry Advisory Group. This group should include representatives from small businesses and independent industry experts to provide guidance on marketplace design, pricing models, security, data integrity, and the evolving needs of federal buyers. Such a body would ensure accountability, transparency, and an inclusive process moving forward.

5. Streamline the GSA Schedules Program and Eliminate Redundant, Wasteful Buying Channels

Congress must take decisive steps to modernize and streamline the GSA Schedules Program. While accountability and compliance are essential, the current system is overly complex, burdensome, and filled with red tape that disproportionately impacts small businesses. Worse, a patchwork of redundant buying programs has emerged across agencies, wasting taxpayer dollars and diluting true competition. We must avoid creating a "Wild West" of procurement where oversight is lacking, and rules are inconsistently applied. Instead, we urge Congress to focus on rationalizing the system—consolidating overlapping programs, improving efficiency, and holding all participants accountable.

Small businesses are uniquely positioned to help the federal government achieve cost savings, drive innovation, and improve procurement accountability. Reforming GSA processes and updating the FAR—done the right way—can unleash the full potential of America's entrepreneurial engine. But any modernization effort must be done with small businesses, not to them.

Congress must resist any temptation to hand over the government procurement system to massive online retailers who have a long history of anti-competitive behavior. Instead, we should be lifting up the small, community-based suppliers who have been reliable government partners for decades.

We urge this Committee and Congress to act boldly, deliberately, and inclusively in your pursuit of reform. Hold future hearings that spotlight industries—such as the office supply sector—that are comprised predominantly of small businesses. These suppliers have real-world experience navigating the GSA, deep insights into the challenges and inefficiencies of current systems, and concrete recommendations that can help build a more effective and responsive procurement framework.

On behalf of the small business community, thank you again for your leadership and for recognizing that America's small businesses must continue to be essential partners in building a more modern, competitive, and accountable federal government.

We look forward to working with you to advance real solutions that empower small businesses—not handouts, but meaningful opportunities to compete, grow, and ultimately scale into the next generation of American success stories. Time and again, small businesses have answered the call



during our nation's most difficult moments. Whether it was stepping up during natural disasters, providing critical support during national emergencies, or keeping communities afloat throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses have consistently been on the front lines. In many cases, they were the ones who kept the economy moving when everything else stood still. This country was built on the grit and determination of small business owners, and we urge Congress to stand with us to ensure we can continue delivering the highest-quality products, services, and innovative solutions to our federal government.