

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 1606, With an Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1606

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 14, 2023

Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. MCGARVEY, and Mr. ELLZEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veteran Entrepreneur-
5 ship Training Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**

7 Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
8 657b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 “(h) BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.—

2 “(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this
3 subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

4 “(A) a member of the Armed Forces, in-
5 cluding the National Guard or Reserves;

6 “(B) an individual who is participating in
7 the Transition Assistance Program established
8 under section 1144 of title 10, United States
9 Code;

10 “(C) an individual who—

11 “(i) served on active duty in any
12 branch of the Armed Forces, including the
13 National Guard or Reserves; and

14 “(ii) was discharged or released from
15 such service under conditions other than
16 dishonorable; and

17 “(D) a spouse or dependent of an indi-
18 vidual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or
19 (C).

20 “(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—During the period be-
21 ginning on the date of enactment of this subsection
22 and ending on September 30, 2028, the Adminis-
23 trator shall carry out a program to be known as the
24 ‘Boots to Business Program’ to provide entrepre-
25 neurship training to covered individuals.

1 “(3) GOALS.—The goals of the Boots to Busi-
2 ness Program are to—

3 “(A) provide assistance and in-depth train-
4 ing to covered individuals interested in business
5 ownership; and

6 “(B) provide covered individuals with the
7 tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify
8 a business opportunity, draft a business plan,
9 identify sources of capital, connect with local
10 resources for small business concerns, and start
11 up a small business concern.

12 “(4) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Busi-
14 ness Program may include—

15 “(i) a presentation providing exposure
16 to the considerations involved in self-em-
17 ployment and ownership of a small busi-
18 ness concern;

19 “(ii) an online, self-study course fo-
20 cused on the basic skills of entrepreneur-
21 ship, the language of business, and the
22 considerations involved in self-employment
23 and ownership of a small business concern;

24 “(iii) an in-person classroom instruc-
25 tion component providing an introduction

1 to the foundations of self employment and
2 ownership of a small business concern; and

3 “(iv) in-depth training delivered
4 through online instruction, including an
5 online course that leads to the creation of
6 a business plan.

7 “(B) COLLABORATION.—The Adminis-
8 trator may—

9 “(i) collaborate with public and pri-
10 vate entities to develop course curricula for
11 the Boots to Business Program; and

12 “(ii) modify program components in
13 coordination with entities participating in a
14 Warriors in Transition program, as defined
15 in section 738(e) of the National Defense
16 Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013
17 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

18 “(C) USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS AND
19 DISTRICT OFFICES.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator
21 shall—

22 “(I) ensure that Veteran Busi-
23 ness Outreach Centers regularly par-
24 ticipate, on a nationwide basis, in the
25 Boots to Business Program; and

1 “(II) to the maximum extent
2 practicable, use district offices of the
3 Administration and a variety of other
4 resource partners and entities in ad-
5 ministering the Boots to Business
6 Program.

7 “(ii) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying
8 out clause (i), the Administrator may make
9 grants, subject to the availability of appro-
10 priations in advance, to Veteran Business
11 Outreach Centers, other resource partners,
12 or other entities to carry out components
13 of the Boots to Business Program.

14 “(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF
15 DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—
16 The Administrator shall make available to the
17 Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
18 Labor information regarding the Boots to Busi-
19 ness Program, including all course materials
20 and outreach materials related to the Boots to
21 Business Program, for inclusion on the websites
22 of the Department of Defense and the Depart-
23 ment of Labor relating to the Transition Assist-
24 ance Program, in the Transition Assistance
25 Program manual, and in other relevant mate-

1 rials available for distribution from the Sec-
2 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor.

3 “(E) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF
4 VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In consultation with the
5 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Adminis-
6 trator shall make available for distribution and
7 display on the website of the Department of
8 Veterans Affairs and at local facilities of the
9 Department of Veterans Affairs outreach mate-
10 rials regarding the Boots to Business Program,
11 which shall, at a minimum—

12 “(i) describe the Boots to Business
13 Program and the services provided; and

14 “(ii) include eligibility requirements
15 for participating in the Boots to Business
16 Program.

17 “(F) AVAILABILITY TO OTHER PARTICI-
18 PATING AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall
19 ensure information regarding the Boots to
20 Business program, including all course mate-
21 rials and outreach materials related to the
22 Boots to Business Program, is made available
23 to other participating agencies in the Transition
24 Assistance Program and upon request of other
25 agencies.

1 “(5) COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCEDURES.—
2 The Administration shall use relevant competitive
3 bidding procedures with respect to any contract or
4 cooperative agreement executed by the Administra-
5 tion under the Boots to Business Program.

6 “(6) PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OP-
7 PORTUNITY.—Not later than 30 days before the
8 deadline for submitting applications for any funding
9 opportunity under the Boots to Business Program,
10 the Administration shall publish a notice of the
11 funding opportunity.

12 “(7) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
13 the date of enactment of this subsection, and not
14 less frequently than annually thereafter, the Admin-
15 istrator shall submit to the Committee on Small
16 Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and
17 the Committee on Small Business of the House of
18 Representatives a report on the performance and ef-
19 fectiveness of the Boots to Business Program,
20 which—

21 “(A) may be included as part of another
22 report submitted to such committees by the Ad-
23 ministrator related to the Office of Veterans
24 Business Development; and

1 “(B) shall summarize available information
2 relating to—

3 “(i) grants awarded under paragraph
4 (4)(C);

5 “(ii) the total cost of the Boots to
6 Business Program;

7 “(iii) the number of program partici-
8 pants using each component of the Boots
9 to Business Program;

10 “(iv) the completion rates for each
11 component of the Boots to Business Pro-
12 gram;

13 “(v) to the extent possible—

14 “(I) the demographics of pro-
15 gram participants, to include gender,
16 age, race, ethnicity, and relationship
17 to military;

18 “(II) the number of program
19 participants that connect with a dis-
20 trict office of the Administration, a
21 Veteran Business Outreach Center, or
22 another resource partner of the Ad-
23 ministration;

1 “(III) the number of program
2 participants that start a small busi-
3 ness concern;

4 “(IV) the results of the Boots to
5 Business and Boots to Business
6 Reboot course quality surveys con-
7 ducted by the Office of Veterans Busi-
8 ness Development before and after at-
9 tending each of those courses, includ-
10 ing a summary of any comments re-
11 ceived from program participants;

12 “(V) the results of the Boots to
13 Business Program outcome surveys
14 conducted by the Office of Veterans
15 Business Development, including a
16 summary of any comments received
17 from program participants; and

18 “(VI) the results of other ger-
19 mane participant satisfaction surveys;

20 “(C) an evaluation of the overall effective-
21 ness of the Boots to Business Program based
22 on each geographic region covered by the Ad-
23 ministration during the most recent fiscal year;

24 “(D) an assessment of additional perform-
25 ance outcome measures for the Boots to Busi-

1 ness Program, as identified by the Adminis-
2 trator;

3 “(E) any recommendations of the Adminis-
4 trator for improvement of the Boots to Busi-
5 ness Program, which may include expansion of
6 the types of individuals who are covered individ-
7 uals;

8 “(F) an explanation of how the Boots to
9 Business Program has been integrated with
10 other transition programs and related resources
11 of the Administration and other Federal agen-
12 cies; and

13 “(G) any additional information the Ad-
14 ministrators determine necessary.”.