

Testimony of Tod Greenfield to The Committee on Small Business hearing: “National Small Business Week: Celebrating our Main Street Champions” Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Good morning Chair Velazquez, and distinguished members of Congress, Thanks for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I am Tod Greenfield, I live in Nassau County, NY. I am an owner and VP of Martin Greenfield Clothiers in Bushwick, Brooklyn. We produce custom clothing for businesspeople and weddings, as well as presidents and celebrities.

As some of you may know, my Father Martin Greenfield emigrated to the United States as an orphaned Holocaust survivor in 1947. He got his first job as a floor boy at the GGG clothing factory we now operate in. Martin went to night school to learn English, got his citizenship, and worked at the factory for 30 years, becoming the production manager. In 1977 after his employer decided to shut down the factory Martin purchased it and established Martin Greenfield Clothiers. Martin has always been grateful for having been liberated from Buchenwald by the United States Army. He started his career as a Union member and always felt a strong desire to give back to the communities that welcomed him.

When the neighborhood got rough and factories started moving away Martin pulled other owners together and helped establish one of the first Industrial parks in NYC, now known as Evergreen. My father always considered the needs of the employees, the neighborhood, the vendors, and customers in his decision-making.

These are values instilled into my brother Jay and I who worked alongside Martin for over 35 years. I currently oversee production, human resources, sourcing, and facility management at our company. I also serve as the current Board Chair of Evergreen.

Our company wasn't prepared for the Covid shutdown and sudden loss of business. We could not have survived the devastating effect without the 2 PPP loans, the EIDL Loan, and the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) we received. These enabled us to hang on and continue paying our employees' healthcare during the shutdown and the long months after.

Our business (custom suits and tuxedos) is very dependent on events, business people dressing for the office, lawyers dressing for court, and film and television production. Our industry was particularly hard hit because of this dependance upon in person events. This came on top of decades of competing against cheap imports from foreign manufactures who benefit from unfair foreign government support.

Directly because of covid, our sales were down over 50% for an entire year! We are finally experiencing a return in demand for our clothing; however, sales are still down over 25%; but we are confident demand will continue growing.

As the only union men's clothing manufacturer left in NYC, we are an important resource providing living wage jobs to over 50 mostly immigrant craftspeople. Just as our father was able to send my brother and I to collage, so have hundreds of our employees been able establish their families here in Brooklyn. We were able to provide safe access to sewing machinery and space for Parsons School of Design students while their school was closed because of covid. Over the years we've hosted classes from Parsons, FIT, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and many other collages and high schools who seek hands-on learning experiences.

When the Covid lockdown silenced the factory, we were able to safely produce and donate tens of thousands of masks and thousands of hospital gowns needed by our local frontline community. Before our first PPP loan was funded, we were able to raise money through a GoFundMe enabling us to purchase mask making supplies. We donated masks to St. Nick's Alliance, Downstate Medical Center, The New York City Administration for Children's Services, as well as many hospitals and frontline workers. However, this support has ended before the pandemic. I urge you consider some additional relief to especially hard-hit industries like ours which depend on in person events.

I want to thank you. Your actions through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan provided lifesaving support to our company, our employees, and our community here in Brooklyn!