



March 4, 2019

Chair Marco Rubio
Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Ben Cardin
Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rubio and Ranking Member Cardin:

On behalf of the members of Women Construction Owners and Executives (WCOE), I am writing to express WCOE's strong support for two procurement bills which would help strengthen the role played by women small business contractors in the federal construction market. The House has already passed these important reforms and WCOE hopes the Senate Small Business Committee will take action before the end of the session. There is no corresponding Senate bills so we would hope these could be passed as part of a larger package of small business contracting reforms.

Incentivizing Fairness in Subcontracting Act ([H.R. 227](#))

Introduced by Representatives Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) and Trent Kelly (R-MS), H.R. [227](#), would give subcontractors a new procedure to file formal notification to the federal government on the lack of prompt payment for completed work. The dispute process would go through the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization ('OSDBU') and would then require it to determine the validity of a claim and the resolution process. In turn the bill also clarifies that prime contractors have the ability to receive subcontracting credit for lower tiers.

This bill is important because access to capital remains one of the most limiting factors to women-owned businesses in the construction industry. The struggle for necessary capital affects not only the establishment of new women-owned construction businesses but also the sustainability and growth of already established women-owned construction firms. It is, therefore, especially critical for women-owned business to be paid promptly on completion of work in both the public and private sector. In the public market there is a need to improve compliance with existing contractor payment regulations in federal and federally assisted procurement. Better compliance with payment rules by prime contractors, coupled with more transparency by federal agencies regarding compliance is particularly critical in ensuring women construction owners succeed.

Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act (H.R. 190)

Introduced by Representative Roger Marshall (R-KS), H.R. 190 would raise the dollar amount of sole-source contract awards available for **women-owned (WOSB) or service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) is an eligible WOSB or SDVOSB**. This is necessary because the current threshold has not kept up with inflation. This change could help expand the number of women-owned construction firms participating in the federal construction market.

WCOE's focus is helping women-owned businesses — and women executives — succeed in the construction industry and we look forward to working with the Committee to support women in the construction industry. We hope the Senate will act expeditiously on these two important small business bills.

Sincerely,

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