

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2018

The Honorable James Lankford
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
The Capitol, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
The Capitol, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lankford and Ranking Member Coons:

We are writing to respectfully request that the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2019 provide \$18 million for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Women's Business Center (WBC) program. The SBA's Women's Business Center program was established in 1988 by the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-533) to provide specialized counseling, training, and other assistance to women, particularly in socially and economically disadvantaged communities. In Fiscal Year 2017, WBCs served more than 148,000 entrepreneurs by providing more than 100,000 hours of training and counseling. WBCs assisted with nearly \$500 million in private capital infusion and helped create more than 23,000 jobs and 17,000 new businesses.

More and more women are starting their own small business. WBCs have assisted over 2 million women in this effort. The latest data shows that there are more than 11 million women who now own firms in the United States, an increase of 45 percent since 2007 and 5 times the national average rate. Together, women-owned businesses have 9 million employees and generate \$1.6 trillion in revenues. Today, minority-women-owned small businesses account for one-third of all women-owned businesses in the United States.

Yet, funding for WBCs has remained flat for many years. The President's Budget requests \$16 million funding for WBCs for FY2019, a \$2 million cut from current levels. The WBC program is deserving of federal funding, and any cuts to the program would seriously harm the only network dedicated to serving the country's more than 11 million women entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



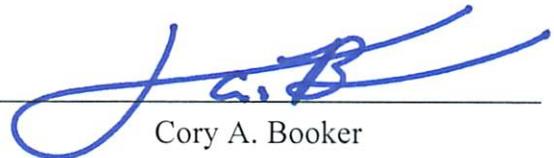
Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



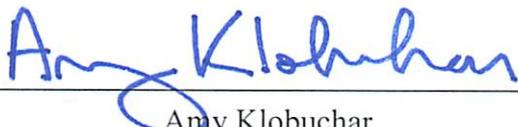
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Maggie Hassan
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



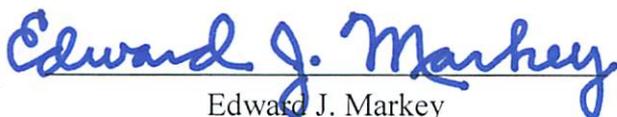
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator