

crucial part of our economy, helping to create jobs and spur economic growth.

It's no secret why they are successful. The skills and training that our veterans learn in the military are incredibly valuable in the private sector. However, despite their experience, many veterans leave the military without the resources to translate their skills to the challenges of starting and running a business. This bill will make sure our veterans have the support they need by establishing a nationwide network of Veterans Business Centers.

These centers will provide counseling and business training. They will assist in accessing capital and securing loans and credit, and they will help veterans navigate the procurement process to compete more effectively in the Federal marketplace.

Earlier this year, I spoke with a veteran in my district who started his own small business just 3 years ago; and as of this year, he has already created hundreds of jobs. Despite years of experience in the military, he told me that the only way that he got started was because of the support from other veteran business owners who showed him the ropes.

While he was fortunate, not all of our veterans are in the same position. The Veterans Business Centers will ensure that all veterans have access to the same resources and information so that they too can launch and grow their own businesses. We know already from the existing outreach centers and Small Business Development Centers that the model can be very successful. My bill will build on what works and expand access to these critical services, especially in areas of the country with large numbers of veterans.

The Veterans Business Center Act of 2009 has the support of both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and most importantly, it will help spur the growth of small businesses and create jobs because at a time when we are working to rebuild our economy, America must draw upon the ingenuity of our small businesses and the dedication of our veteran entrepreneurs. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1803, the Veterans Business Center Act of 2009. By creating a Veterans Business Center program, this bill supplies veterans with the academic, instructional and economic support that they need to start their own businesses. In my home State of Florida, 99 percent of the State's employers are small businesses. At a time when Florida is facing unprecedented economic difficulties, this bill will provide veterans in my district with the entrepreneurial training and counseling that they need to enter this vital part of Florida's economy.

I especially like the part of the bill that targets areas with high veteran populations. Madam Chairman, do I have the area for you: certainly the Tampa Bay area is home to so many veterans. We have MacDill; we have two wonderful veterans hospitals right there; and the third one is about to be built in the Orlando area.

While serving in the Armed Forces, our men and women in uniform often need to put their own career goals and ambitions on hold while risking their lives to protect our freedom. One way that we can honor our troops for their sacrifices and bravery is to provide them with the opportunity to pursue their dreams once they return from the battlefield. This Veterans Business Center Act of 2009 is an important step in achieving this goal. I want to thank Mr. NYE for introducing this bill and certainly Ms. VELÁZQUEZ from New York for allowing the bill to come before her committee and eventually to the floor. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. If the gentleman is ready to close or yield back, I am ready to close.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I just want to thank the chairwoman for her leadership with this and Mr. NYE for this piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Again, Mr. Speaker, let me just take the opportunity to thank Mr. NYE and all the members from the other side on the Small Business Committee who have worked on this legislation. I encourage all the Members to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1803, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EDUCATING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY ACT

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1807) to provide distance learning to potential and existing entrepreneurs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1807

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Educating Entrepreneurs through Today's Technology Act".

SEC. 2. EDUCATING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended by redesignating section 44

as section 45 and by inserting the following new section after section 43:

"SEC. 44. EDUCATING AND NETWORKING ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

"(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to provide distance learning and opportunities for the exchange of peer-to-peer technical assistance through online networking to potential and existing entrepreneurs through the use of technology.

"(b) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term 'qualified third-party vendor' means an entity with experience in distance learning content or communications technology, or both, with the ability to utilize on-line, satellite, video-on-demand, and connected community-based organizations to distribute and conduct distance learning and establish an online network for use by potential and existing entrepreneurs to facilitate the exchange of peer-to-peer technical assistance related to entrepreneurship, credit management, financial literacy, and Federal small business development programs.

"(c) AUTHORITY.—The Administrator shall contract with qualified third-party vendors for entrepreneurial training content, the development of communications technology that can distribute content under this section throughout the United States, and the establishment of a nationwide, online network for the exchange of peer-to-peer technical assistance. The Administrator shall contract with at least two qualified third-party vendors to develop content.

"(d) CONTENT.—The Administrator shall ensure that the content referred to in subsection (c) is timely and relevant to entrepreneurial development and can be successfully communicated remotely to an audience through the use of technology. The Administrator shall, to the maximum extent practicable, promote content that makes use of technologies that allow for remote interaction by the content provider with an audience. The Administrator shall ensure that the content is catalogued and accessible to small businesses on-line or through other remote technologies.

"(e) COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.—The Administrator shall ensure that the communications technology referred to in subsection (c) is able to distribute content throughout all 50 States and the territories of the United States to small business concerns, home-based businesses, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, Veterans Business Centers, SCORE chapters, and the Small Business Administration and network entrepreneurs throughout all 50 States and the territories of the United States to allow for peer-to-peer learning through the creation of a location online that allows entrepreneurs and small business owners the opportunity to exchange technical assistance through the sharing of information. To the extent possible, the qualified third-party vendor should deliver the content and facilitate the networking using broadband technology.

"(f) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator shall submit a report to Congress 6 months after the date of the enactment of this section containing an analysis of the Small Business Administration's progress in implementing this section. The Administrator shall submit a report to Congress 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter containing the number of presentations made under this section, the number of small businesses served under this section, the extent to which this section resulted in the establishment of new businesses, and feedback on the usefulness of this medium in presenting entrepreneurial education and facilitating the exchange of peer-to-peer technical assistance throughout the United States.

“(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 and 2011.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this bill which will help entrepreneurs grow their businesses through the expanded use of cutting-edge technology. This bill is a bipartisan product introduced by Representative THOMPSON from Pennsylvania and promises to go a long way in helping small firms flourish. Entrepreneurship is the tested tool for powering economies. So it should come as no surprise that entrepreneurial development, or ED, programs, have a track record for sparking growth. In fact, every \$1 put into these initiatives puts another \$2.87 into the Treasury. You cannot argue with that kind of return, especially at a time when our economy is fighting to recover.

While small business growth is important to any community, it is especially vital in struggling rural regions and urban areas. When recession hits, these areas fall the hardest. That is why this bill is so important. Through the use of cutting-edge technology, it delivers entrepreneurial development training to Americans everywhere. In doing so, it encourages business growth in places where it might not otherwise take root.

This is critical because entrepreneurship is more than a means of employment. It is a path to economic independence. Technology is often referred to as the great equalizer. It is an avenue through which all businesses, large and small, can attract new customers and reach untapped markets. It is also an effective means for delivering information and sharing data.

The Educating Entrepreneurs through Today’s Technology Act builds on those two capabilities. With the click of a mouse, an aspiring entrepreneur in Appalachia can participate in a training program broadcast out of San Francisco. Resources such as satellite seminars and online information sessions make it easy for entrepreneurs everywhere to access information on a broad range of topics. Starting and running a small business can be chal-

lenging. In the current environment, even seasoned entrepreneurs are struggling to adapt. Proper training in areas like credit management, financial literacy and Federal small business programs are more important than ever. Whether we are talking about fledgling entrepreneurs or those with years of experience, everyone can benefit from this kind of information.

There is no question that our economy looks different today than it did the last time SBA’s ED programs were updated. In terms of technology alone, we have grown by leaps and bounds. This bill reflects that change. It makes sure small firms can use modern technology to the best of their advantage. With these services, startups will be able to build a solid business foundation. Meanwhile, established firms will be able to retool and improve their existing operations.

As we continue to work our way towards recovery, small businesses will be on the front lines. It only makes sense to give them all the tools they need to succeed because with the technology of today they can help build prosperity for tomorrow. Mr. THOMPSON’s bill gives them the resources to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1807, the Educating Entrepreneurs through Today’s Technology Act. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, employing roughly half of United States workers. While our communities are experiencing high unemployment rates, the entrepreneurial spirit remains alive and well. For many underserved and rural areas, it is critical to have the opportunity and the ability to tap into resources that will foster further economic development and provide prospective entrepreneurs with the same access afforded to their suburban and urban counterparts.

H.R. 1807 will allow third parties the opportunity to provide high-quality tele-distance training through a competitive grants process administered by the SBA. The measure will provide for third-party vendors with experience in distance learning content and communications technology. It will employ online, satellite, video-connected, community-based organizations to distribute and conduct distance learning related to entrepreneurship, credit management, financial literacy, home-ownership and Federal small business development programs.

The Small Business Administration will ensure that the communications technology is distributed through all 50 States and U.S. territories to home-based businesses, Small Business Development Centers, Women’s Business Centers, Veterans Business Centers and SBA district offices. Additionally, this measure would require that the online distance learning program provided for

in title II of the bill, include the establishment of an online networking site where entrepreneurs and small business owners can go to interact with one another. The goal of this networking site is to facilitate the exchange of peer-to-peer technical assistance.

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This will allow for prospective and established entrepreneurs and small business owners to interact with each other to troubleshoot problems and share best practices for interacting with SBA, securing financing, navigating government regulations, and the slew of odds and ends that arise when getting a small business off the ground. There is no substitute for being able to fall back on lessons learned from experience, and peer to peer will arm current and prospective entrepreneurs with this priceless information from individuals who have been there before.

Mr. Speaker, for many entrepreneurs across the country, in order to access SBA and Small Business Development Centers they have to drive long distances. In my rural district, we have learned to use our limited resources wisely, and this can also be said for rural and underserved communities across the Nation.

This measure recognizes a one-size-fits-all textbook approach to addressing entrepreneurial concerns is seldom the solution. Passage of this measure will empower these very entrepreneurs to navigate the many hurdles facing emerging businesses.

I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1807 and continue the House’s commitment to our Nation’s entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1807, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1513) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1513

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,