

and Mr. EVANS. It has broad bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 6348, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6348, the Small Business ACE Act.

This important legislation updates SBA’s outdated real estate appraisal threshold for the 504 loan program. It is vital for our country’s small businesses that we keep current laws in sync with what is going on in the commercial market.

More importantly, this commonsense fix ensures as many small business borrowers as possible can affordably access the capital they need to grow their businesses and create jobs.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to recognize the chairman for his continued willingness to work across the aisle. He and his staff have set a bipartisan tone that I think all of us on this committee can be proud of. As a result, we are carrying out our responsibilities in a timely manner with input from both Republican and Democratic Members.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her indications that we work very much in a bipartisan manner in our committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), whom I thank for his leadership in this effort.

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and ranking member for supporting the Small Business Access to Capital and Efficiency Act, or Small Business ACE Act. I am also grateful to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for joining as a cosponsor and for my colleagues on the Small Business Committee for advancing this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business ACE Act is critical to reducing burdensome red tape and regulations that fall so disproportionately on small business. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy across the country and certainly in my home State of Utah where they make up over 99 percent of all Utah businesses and contribute two-thirds of all job growth. Without a doubt, the strength of our economy depends on these small businesses.

Although the economy continues to improve, small businesses and entrepreneurs often face challenges accessing capital. To assist creditworthy innovators, the Small Business Administration offers numerous lending programs, including the 504 loan program. Without using a single taxpayer dollar, the program has helped many well-known businesses throughout the United States and Utah.

In the past 20 years, the 504 program has supported over 4,500 entrepreneurs and nearly 64,000 jobs in Utah alone. However, despite the program’s positive status, Federal red tape and conflicting regulations have hampered its development, weighing it down with roadblocks and uncertainty. As a result, many small businesses still have difficulty accessing capital.

The Small Business ACE Act will help fix this by eliminating Federal regulations burdening the program and harmonizing conflicting real estate appraisal thresholds that have prevented eligible small businesses from accessing capital.

I am pleased that my bill has broad support from important stakeholders, like the National Association of Development Companies, Mountain West Small Business Finance, and Utah Certified Development Company, that know better than anyone just how essential the 504 small business lending program is and how critical it is that we improve it. By reducing burdens on small businesses, we help ensure not only their individual success, but the success for our Nation’s economy.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to put forth this commonsense legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), who is the ranking member on the Subcommittee of Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their bipartisan leadership.

I am pleased to join with my colleague, Congressman JOHN CURTIS from Utah, in putting forth this important piece of legislation. I am pleased to join as the cosponsor of Congressman CURTIS on H.R. 6348, the Small Business Access to Capital and Efficiency Act, which adjusts the real estate appraisal threshold under the section 504 program to bring them into line with thresholds used by the Federal banking regulator. This bill also passed out of the Small Business Committee in July.

The city of Philadelphia has a robust real estate industry which employs appraisers, lenders, construction workers, bankers, and numerous others. The point is the industry is responsible for jobs, jobs, and more jobs. Currently, the Small Business Act mandates this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this particular bill. This is very important to our country.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for his leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, in closing, with this legislation, we are only responding to the reality of the situation in the commercial lending market.

This is a commonsense fix with bipartisan support that will ensure small businesses are not unfairly burdened with appraisal requirements. Doing so allows small firms to allocate their working capital as wisely and efficiently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude, the SBA’s 504/CDC loan program is vital to many creditworthy small businesses that cannot obtain credit elsewhere. To reduce confusion from conflicting Federal rules, H.R. 6348 will update and bring SBA’s commercial real estate threshold to the same level as other Federal financial regulators.

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We must continue to work together to free small business owners from conflicting Federal regulations. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan reform instituted in H.R. 6348.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6348.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

7(a) REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL HARMONIZATION ACT

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6347) to adjust the real estate appraisal thresholds under the 7(a) program to bring them into line with the thresholds used by the Federal banking regulators, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6347

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 “7(a) Real Estate Appraisal Harmonization Act”.

SEC. 2. APPRAISAL THRESHOLDS.

Section 7(a)(29) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(29)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and adjusting the margins of such clauses accordingly;

(2) by striking “With respect to” and inserting the following:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to”;

(3) in clause (i), as so redesignated, by striking “for more than \$250,000” and inserting “, if such loan is in an amount greater than the Federal banking regulator appraisal threshold”;

(4) in clause (ii), as so redesignated, by striking “for \$250,000 or less” and inserting “, if such loan is in an amount equal to or

less than the Federal banking regulator appraisal threshold"; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

"(B) FEDERAL BANKING REGULATOR APPRAISAL THRESHOLD DEFINED.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'Federal banking regulator appraisal threshold' means the lesser of the threshold amounts set by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for when a federally related transaction that is a commercial real estate transaction requires an appraisal prepared by a State licensed or certified appraiser."

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which 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 gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, similar to the SBA's 504/CDC loan program, the SBA's 7(a) loan program assists small businesses that have a business plan in place for success but do not have the ability to obtain credit elsewhere. Through a partnership with financial institutions, the SBA provides a government guarantee to help the small business grow and create jobs. Importantly, this program has been running on zero cost to the American taxpayers for years.

While the economy has been improving, conflicting Federal rules and regulations often present uncertainty and confusion for small businesses and those within the 7(a) loan program.

When an SBA 7(a) loan is used in a commercial real estate transaction, a formal State licensed or certified appraisal is statutorily required on all transactions above \$250,000. However, the value set by Federal financial regulators has recently been increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000. To provide clarity for small businesses, H.R. 6347 modernizes and mirrors the SBA's commercial real estate appraisal threshold with the value set by Federal financial regulators.

Similar to H.R. 6348, H.R. 6347 does not provide an exact dollar threshold. Rather, it ties the SBA's 7(a) threshold to the value set by Federal financial regulators. This benchmark provision will prevent conflict as the threshold value is updated in the future.

I would like to thank Mr. EVANS and Mr. CURTIS for working in a bipartisan manner to find a solution to this problem that is impacting small businesses. The bill has broad bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 6347, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6347, the 7(a) Real Estate Harmonization Act, which updates SBA's outdated real estate appraisal threshold for the 7(a) loan guarantee program.

The 7(a) loan program, the SBA's flagship lending product, is a vital source of capital for thousands of small businesses unable to secure financing through traditional lending. Today's bill brings the 7(a) program's real estate appraisal threshold in line with other Federal banking regulators, namely the Fed, OCC, and FDIC. In doing so, it eliminates the burden lenders currently face in having to meet two different standards. I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this bipartisan piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS), who is the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support of this bill.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill is important for modernization and moving toward the future. In the city of Philadelphia, we have a lot of opportunities. It is most important that we rise in competitiveness from where we are today. As the ranking member has stated very clearly, this again just makes the opportunities more competitive.

I think it is most important in this environment today that we are sensitive to small businesses because they are the backbone of our future. It is important to understand that in a city like Philadelphia, which has 26 percent poverty—one of the largest major cities in this country—we need to add this to the toolbox. The importance of growing businesses, particularly small businesses, is extremely important to us all.

So I stand here today and join with my colleagues and ask that we support this legislation that will be very important in the toolbox of small businesses.

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

This past spring, Federal banking regulators updated their threshold level for when a State licensed or certified appraisal is required, raising it to \$500,000. In order to remain consistent with the rest of the market, SBA's levels should match the market. This bill does this by harmonizing the real estate appraisal threshold for the SBA's 7(a) program with the rest of the marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS) for his leadership on this bill.

Small businesses do not employ an army of tax and accounting specialists. All too often, the small business owner must sacrifice time and energy away from growing his or her business to comply with Federal rules and regulations. While we are making progress on reducing regulations, at times, Federal rules conflict.

As we have heard today, H.R. 6347 aims to reduce the confusion that exists for small businesses that utilize the Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan program when it comes to the commercial real estate appraisal threshold.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan updates proposed in this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EMMER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6347.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCACY IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2018

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6316) to clarify the primary functions and duties of the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6316

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 "Small Business Advocacy Improvements Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO PRIMARY FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF ADVOCACY OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

(a) PRIMARY FUNCTIONS.—Section 202 of Public Law 94-305 (15 U.S.C. 634b) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting "and the international economy" after "economy";

(2) in paragraph (9), by striking "complete" and inserting "compete"; and

(3) in paragraph (12), by striking "serviced-disabled" and inserting "service-disabled".

(b) DUTIES.—Section 203(a) of Public Law 94-305 (15 U.S.C. 634c) is amended—

(1) in paragraph 5, by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in paragraph 6, by striking the period at the end and inserting "and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(7) represent the views and interests of small businesses before foreign governments and international entities for the purpose of contributing to regulatory and trade initiatives which may affect small businesses."