

with WOSBs, knowing that the SBA has already verified them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I close by thanking the ranking member from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for her leadership on this bill and her many years of work to create, strengthen, and enhance the Women-Owned Small Business program. I am pleased to support this bill and encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1816, 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.

#### PLAIN LANGUAGE IN CONTRACTING ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 787) to require plain language and the inclusion of key words in covered notices that are clear, concise, and accessible to small business concerns, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 787

*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 “Plain Language in Contracting Act”.

#### SEC. 2. ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY IN COVERED NOTICES FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each covered notice shall be written in a manner—

(1) such that a small business concern can easily understand the intent of the covered notice; and

(2) that—

(A) is clear, concise, and well-organized; and

(B) to the maximum extent practicable, follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field of the covered notice and the intended audience of the covered notice.

(b) INCLUSION OF KEY WORDS IN COVERED NOTICES.—Each covered notice shall, to the maximum extent practicable, include key words in the description of the covered no-

tice such that a small business concern seeking contract opportunities using the single, Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code, can easily identify and understand such covered notice.

(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue rules to carry out this section.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED NOTICE.—The term “covered notice” means a notice pertaining to small business concerns published by a Federal agency on the single Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms “Federal agency” and “small business concern” have the meanings given those terms, respectively, in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

#### SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 787, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, introduced by Representatives LALOTA, THANEDAR, and TRAN.

The Plain Language in Contracting Act is a vital piece of legislation designed to limit the cumbersome language used in government contract solicitations. This will empower small businesses to have a greater ability to compete for valuable government contracts.

The number of small businesses contracting with the government has been shrinking for years, and over the past few years the Committee on Small Business has heard firsthand that excessive red tape and unclear government-speak have made working and contracting with the government more difficult and costly for small businesses.

Currently, government contract solicitations are written in an overly complex way that is difficult to navigate unless someone is an attorney or contract specialist. One study found that only 3 percent of government contracts are written in a way that someone without a college degree could understand.

Small businesses often lack the resources to hire an army of attorneys

and contract specialists needed to fully understand these contracts, which creates difficulties in submitting successful bids. The wonky nature of this so-called government-speak has contributed to the shocking loss of small businesses in government contracting.

H.R. 787 will finally remove this unnecessary barrier facing small businesses by forcing the government to take commonsense action and write contract solicitations using simple, plain language.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 787, the Plain Language in Contracting Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives LALOTA and TRAN, for their work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the complexity of the government's procurement process and requirements can be overwhelming to small businesses, including those seeking a Federal contract for the first time.

This government-speak, words we only find in government contracting documents like requests for proposals or solicitations, compound the complexity and may disincentivize firms from bidding.

This bill attempts to add clarity by requiring documents to be written in a plain way that helps firms more easily understand what the government is buying.

Small firms should not be put off from working with the government because available opportunities are not communicated clearly. We need more small businesses to bring their talent and innovation into Federal agencies, and I am hopeful this bill will contribute to that effort.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, America's small businesses shouldn't have to hire a lawyer to apply for and win a simple government contract. Yet that is exactly what Washington's bureaucratic process demands today.

That is why I am honored to champion the Plain Language in Contracting Act, which will reduce the burden on small businesses when trying to secure government contracts.

My legislation ensures Federal agencies use clear, straightforward language in solicitations, thereby removing barriers, increasing transparency, and giving small businesses a fair shot.

Time and again, small business owners tell us the government contracting process is so complex, they ultimately walk away. Bidding on a contract is hard enough, but when the language is challenging and understanding it requires an advanced degree, it is easy to see why.

A study conducted by the Naval Postgraduate School, which analyzed 1 million DOD contracts, found less than 3

percent were in plain English. Most were rated difficult or very difficult to read. There is no other way to describe it. It is unacceptable.

Furthermore, of the 33 million small businesses operating in America, 74,000, only 0.22 percent, successfully secure Federal contracts. Mr. Speaker, 0.22 percent is just 1 in every 446 contracts. That is all.

When small businesses are shut out from opportunities because they are overwhelmed by the language, we don't just lose a bidder. We lose innovation. We lose local job creation. Oftentimes, we lose a better price.

The government should facilitate small businesses and not be a barrier. Federal agencies should speak in terms that are clear, consistent, and accessible to the American people.

The Plain Language in Contracting Act does just that. This bill creates a level playing field and ensures every small business can compete for a government contract without needing a lawyer.

I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and his staff, my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, and the entire Small Business Committee for supporting this commonsense solution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill.

MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TRAN).

Mr. TRAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 787, the Plain Language in Contracting Act.

Far too often, bureaucratic barriers and complex government jargon prevent small business owners, especially veterans and immigrant entrepreneurs, from accessing and securing Federal contracting opportunities.

I consistently hear from small business owners in Orange County that the main reason they do not apply for Federal contracts is that the barriers to entry are simply too high.

H.R. 787 will address this barrier facing small business owners and mandate Federal agencies to use clear and accessible language in their contracting opportunities.

I am proud to co-lead this bill, and I thank the gentleman from Long Island (Mr. LALOTA) for working with me to improve the SBA and simplify the Federal contracting process. Let's continue to empower local businesses and ensure that every entrepreneur has the opportunity to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, we will put this in really plain words, since that is what the bill does. Small businesses need to be able to understand what is happening in these contracts. Having language that is easy to understand will enable them to apply for these contracts, which enables them to bring their talents and their innovation to bear in our Federal Government.

Over the last decade, small businesses have been leaving at an alarming rate. Nothing we are doing is working to reverse that trend. In fact, the number of small business vendors in the government's ecosystem has been cut nearly in half.

Having this bill will make it easier for small business owners, people who are already working around the clock, to make their business successful for themselves, their communities, and their employees. They will now have an easier chance of applying for a contract with the Federal Government.

I am hopeful when this legislation is implemented, it will contribute to that goal. I thank the bill's sponsors.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 787, 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.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND PREDICTABILITY IN SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 789) to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to issue rules for cancelled covered solicitations, to amend the Small Business Act to provide assistance to small business concerns relating to certain cancelled solicitations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 789

*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 "Transparency and Predictability in Small Business Opportunities Act".

#### SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION RULES FOR CANCELLED COVERED SOLICITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue rules as follows:

(1) Requiring disclosure of information about a covered solicitation that was issued and cancelled that includes the following:

(A) A justification for the cancellation of such covered solicitation.

(B) Available information about any plans to reissue such covered solicitation and any associated timeframes for such reissuance.

(C) Available information about any plans to include the requirements of such covered solicitation in another contract or task order of the Federal agency.

(2) With respect to a cancelled covered solicitation which the Federal agency does not intend to reissue, establishing procedures for the referral of a small business concern (as defined under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)) that prepared a bid for such covered solicitation to the Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (as defined in section 15(k) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 644(k))) of the Federal agency for assistance in identifying similar contracting opportunities.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The information required under subsection (a) shall be made publicly accessible on the single, Government-wide point of entry described under section 1708 of title 41, United States Code.

(c) COVERED SOLICITATION DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered solicitation" means a solicitation of a Federal agency for a procurement for which two or more small business concerns were eligible to submit a bid.

#### SEC. 3. DUTIES FOR DIRECTORS OF OFFICES OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION RELATING TO CERTAIN CANCELLED SOLICITATIONS.

Section 15(k) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(k)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (21), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(22) shall, when notified by a small business concern that a Federal agency cancelled a solicitation for which such concern prepared a bid and such Federal agency does not intend to reissue such solicitation, assist such concern with identifying similar contracting opportunities.".

#### SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of H.R. 789, the Transparency and Predictability in Small Business Opportunities Act, introduced by Representatives LATIMER, ALFORD, and MFUME.

H.R. 789 seeks to bring clarity to small business owners when solicitations for contracts are canceled. Often, small businesses devote a considerable amount of time and resources in preparing these proposals for solicitations.

Unfortunately, these solicitations are often canceled by agencies with no explanation provided to the businesses that have already submitted proposals.