

the broader 504 portfolio. It is time to bring parity to Main Street and remove the unnecessary lender barriers based on outdated assumptions.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 5763, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5763, the Main Street Parity Act.

One of the key functions of the SBA is to ensure that small businesses in communities across the country have access to the capital they need to grow and scale their operations.

The SBA has long served this need through its loan guarantee program, including the 504/CDC program. The 504/CDC program supports small businesses in accessing capital for the development of major fixed assets like land, buildings, equipment, and machinery. As part of the program, loans are guaranteed for so-called special use properties like amusement parks, car washes, bowling alleys, and gas stations.

When the special use designation was created in 1996, Congress required businesses developing these properties to pay a special purpose penalty. The penalty requires these businesses to provide at least 15 to 20 percent equity instead of the minimum 10 percent for standard 504/CDC loans.

While the additional equity requirement served an important safeguard for the program when first enacted, we have seen over time that the extra risk is not as great as anticipated.

In the past 30 years, technological developments and time have shown that many of these properties can be successfully repurposed for alternative uses, increasing the market pool of potential buyers.

Further, the charge-off rates for special purpose and standard loans are similar, demonstrating that these loans pose no greater risk than regular 504 loans. Because of its limited risk, the special use penalty is no longer necessary.

H.R. 5763 reduces the minimum equity requirement for special purpose properties to at least 10 percent, in line with the requirement for standard 504/CDC loans. Most importantly, it maintains discretionary authority to require higher equity if deemed necessary. This bill is supported by the National Association of Development Companies.

Madam Speaker, I applaud Chairman WILLIAMS’ and Representative SIMON’s bipartisan work on this issue, and I ask all my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SIMON).

Ms. SIMON. Madam Speaker, I thank Representative VELÁZQUEZ for her sup-

port, particularly for freshman members from the Democratic side on the Small Business Committee and to Representative WILLIAMS for his collaboration on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I am extremely proud to lead the Main Street Parity Act with Chair WILLIAMS. As members of the Small Business Committee, one of the most bipartisan committees in the 119th Congress, we hear the same messages repeated every single day: Small businesses don’t need special treatment. In fact, they are just asking for a fair shot in this economy.

The SBA’s 504 loan program is designed to provide that fair shot through basic good policy and affordable, long-term financing. The financing helps small businesses buy buildings, buy property, expand operations, and employ Main Street neighbors throughout our community.

Under the current law, not all small businesses are treated the same. Owners of so-called small purpose properties are required to put up significantly more cash up front, often 5 to 10 percent more than standard property owners. These include places like bowling alleys, car washes, marinas, funeral homes, and recreation centers. These are the kinds of small businesses that serve local families, create jobs, and keep our communities vibrant.

For many entrepreneurs, the higher equity requirement is the difference between jumping in headfirst and creating new economic opportunities for their communities and families or walking away entirely.

This way of doing business just doesn’t reflect our current economic or technological realities. This bill offers a new opportunity for Americans across the country to step forward.

The Main Street Parity Act is common sense. It is a clear fix that brings these loans in line with the 504 standardization programs by setting an equity requirement at 10 percent.

Madam Speaker, I encourage Members from both sides of the aisle to put small business owners and their employees first by supporting this bill.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I, again, thank Chairman WILLIAMS and Representative SIMON for their bipartisan work on this bill. I encourage all my colleagues to vote “yes,” and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, H.R. 5763 allows small businesses on Main Street to have equal access to SBA 504 loans. I urge my colleagues to support this 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. 5763.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

AI FOR MAIN STREET ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5764) to amend the Small Business Act to require small business development centers to assist small business concerns with the use of artificial intelligence, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5764

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 “AI for Main Street Act”.

SEC. 2. GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 21(c)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (T), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in the first subparagraph (U) (relating to encouraging and assisting the provision of succession planning), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(3) by redesignating the second subparagraph (U) (relating to providing training in conjunction with the United States Patent and Trademark Office) as subparagraph (V);

(4) in subparagraph (V), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(5) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(W) assisting small business concerns in evaluating artificial intelligence concerning operations, including by—

“(i) providing information, guidance, and training to small business concerns on the use of artificial intelligence, including—

“(I) best practices for using artificial intelligence;

“(II) using artificial intelligence to plan for unexpected circumstances, protect data and intellectual property, improve cybersecurity, facilitate regulatory compliance, and improve customer trust; and

“(III) incorporating artificial intelligence into business operations; and

“(ii) conducting outreach to the extent practical to small business concerns regarding the use of artificial intelligence.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(gg) ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.—In this Act, the term ‘artificial intelligence’ has the meaning given such term in section 5002 of the National Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act of 2020 (15 U.S.C. 9401).”.

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5764, the AI for Main Street Act, introduced by Representatives ALFORD and SCHOLTEN.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being used to streamline operations, reduce costs, and boost productivity for small businesses. For many small businesses across the country, adopting these tools remains out of reach because they lack the staff, the expertise, or the capital to do so.

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Madam Speaker, the AI for Main Street Act helps address this challenge by directing the SBA's Small Business Development Centers, or SBDCs, to assist small businesses in developing AI technologies into their operations.

These centers operate in partnership with universities and community colleges across the country and are trusted advisers to local entrepreneurs.

This approach builds on work already underway. In September 2024, America's SBDCs, in partnership with Google, launched America's SBDC AI U, which provides hands-on AI training, clinics, and technical assistance to small businesses.

This bill builds on that effort by requiring the SBDC network to have a core duty to assist entrepreneurs nationwide in fighting AI in their businesses.

As artificial intelligence becomes a core driver of productivity and competitiveness, Main Street cannot be left behind. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5764, the AI for Main Street Act.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support the AI for Main Street Act, which would allow SBDCs to assist small business owners on how to evaluate artificial intelligence. I commend Mr. ALFORD and Ms. SCHOLTEN for working together on this bipartisan legislation.

AI has the potential to boost productivity, enhance customer service, and save costs. While it is becoming increasingly common for small busi-

nesses to use AI to streamline their operations, many still do not know how to access it responsibly. If used incorrectly, AI could have disastrous consequences.

That is why it is incredibly important for SBA and its entrepreneurial ecosystem to help small businesses understand the potential pitfalls and learn how to avoid them.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support this bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

Mr. ALFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our AI for Main Street Act.

I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for his leadership. I also thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Foremost, I recognize both Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for her leadership and Congresswoman HILLARY SCHOLTEN for working with me to bring this important bill forward.

A lot of people are talking about AI these days. Will it overtake America? Will it put businessowners and workers out of business? This bill is designed to get ahead of that and to make sure that does not happen. In fact, it will increase businesses in America.

This committee exists for one simple reason, and that is to champion Main Street and the small businesses that line our town squares, that power our farms, support our hospitals, and employ nearly half of the American workforce. Right now, Main Street stands at the doorstep of a major transformation because the AI revolution is not just coming. It is already here.

Whether it is managing inventory, scheduling workers, marketing products, improving cybersecurity, or streamlining paperwork, artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming how business gets done in America.

If small businesses do not have the tools and guidance to adapt to that, if they are fearful of it, they risk getting left behind. They will get left behind by larger competitors with bigger budgets and in-house tech teams. By the way, they are also using AI. That is exactly what this bill addresses.

The AI for Main Street Act directs Small Business Development Centers, SBDCs, to provide counseling, training, and outreach to help small businesses safely evaluate and adopt artificial intelligence tools.

These centers already serve as trusted boots-on-the-ground advisers in communities across the country, such as the University of Missouri-Columbia and Sedalia and other places where these SBDCs are providing real help, real boots on the ground.

Madam Speaker, entrepreneurs rely on them for practical guidance and real-world help that works for their businesses. This bill builds on existing efforts like America's SBDC AI U program and ensures that AI support is

consistent, accessible, and nationwide. It is not just in major metro areas but in rural towns, manufacturing hubs, and agricultural communities like those I represent in Missouri's Fourth Congressional District.

Just as importantly, this bill emphasizes responsible adoption. We want small business owners to understand not only what AI can do but how to use it securely, safely, ethically, and effectively.

This is not about replacing people. It is about empowering people. It is about giving a family-owned business the same opportunity to compete and grow and innovate as a Fortune 500 company.

I am proud of this legislation and how it advanced out of committee with strong bipartisan support. I appreciate the strong backing from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle who recognize that innovation and small business growth should never be partisan issues.

At the end of the day, when Main Street succeeds, America succeeds. The AI for Main Street Act helps ensure that our entrepreneurs are not spectators in the next wave of innovation but our small business owners are leaders in this revolution.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I commend the sponsors for working together on this important legislation to provide small businesses with the training they need.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, H.R. 5764 will directly give small businesses the AI resources and tools for SBDCs across this country. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

Madam Speaker, 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. 5764, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

504 PROGRAM RISK OVERSIGHT ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5788) to amend title V of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to require an annual portfolio risk analysis of loans guaranteed under such title, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.