

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8628

To support the establishment of small business development centers internationally and promote international commerce, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 20, 2020

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mrs. WAGNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To support the establishment of small business development centers internationally and promote international commerce, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Global Small Business
5 Network Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Small businesses empower citizens of a
9 country, strengthen communities, provide employ-

1 ment to millions, and form the backbone of the
2 United States economy.

3 (2) Small business concerns across the United
4 States have benefitted from access to technical as-
5 sistance, regulatory guidance, and educational pro-
6 grams through small business development centers
7 (referred to in this Act as “SBDC”) in the United
8 States.

9 (3) The SBDC model has successfully been
10 adopted in Central America, South America, and the
11 Caribbean, through assistance from the Small Busi-
12 ness Network of the Americas’ initiative funded
13 through the Department of State.

14 (4) The Small Business Network of the Amer-
15 icas’ initiative is a highly effective program that
16 works with host governments in the Americas to es-
17 tablish small business development centers, primarily
18 funded by the host governments.

19 (5) SBDC networks outside the United States
20 serve as important conduits of commerce with the
21 United States, providing important information,
22 tools, and regulatory guidance to small businesses
23 interested in trading with the United States.

24 (6) The establishment of SBDCs in other parts
25 of the world promotes opportunities for small busi-

1 nesses to thrive and engage with the United States
2 economy.

3 **SEC. 3. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS.**

4 (a) GLOBAL SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—

5 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State,
6 in consultation with the Administrator of the United
7 States Agency for International Development and
8 the Administrator of the Small Business Administra-
9 tion, is authorized to establish and administer a
10 Global Small Business Network program.

11 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global
12 Small Business Network program is to—

13 (A) enhance the ability of small business
14 concerns in the United States that are affiliated
15 with a small business development center to ex-
16 port to foreign markets and take part in inter-
17 national commerce; and

18 (B) facilitate partners for small business
19 concerns in the United States and resilient
20 business environments in foreign countries
21 through the development of small business de-
22 velopment centers in foreign countries.

23 (3) AFFILIATION.—The Secretary of State shall
24 determine if a small business development center in

1 a foreign country may affiliate with and participate
2 in the Global Small Business Network program.

3 (4) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of State
4 may coordinate with a national or local government
5 of a foreign country that agrees to assist with devel-
6 oping small business development centers in such
7 country pursuant to a grant awarded under sub-
8 section (c).

9 (5) DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS.—The Secretary
10 of State shall leverage existing programs adminis-
11 tered by the Department of State, the United States
12 Agency for International Development, and other
13 United States Government agencies for the purposes
14 of the Global Small Business Network program.

15 (b) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—

16 (1) SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK OF THE AMER-
17 ICAS.—The Secretary of State may establish a Small
18 Business Network of the Americas for purposes of
19 allowing national and local governments of a foreign
20 country located in Western Hemisphere to partici-
21 pate in the Global Small Business Network program.

22 (2) ASEAN SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—The
23 Secretary of State may establish an ASEAN Small
24 Business Network for purposes of allowing national
25 and local governments of a foreign country that is

1 a member state of the Association of Southeast
2 Asian Nations to participate in the Global Small
3 Business Network program.

4 (c) GRANTS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may
6 make grants to any qualified entity that submits an
7 application in such form, and satisfying such re-
8 quirements, as the Secretary may require.

9 (2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—A qualified entity may
10 receive a grant for one or both of the following pur-
11 poses:

12 (A) To assist national and local govern-
13 ments of a foreign country to develop a small
14 business development center, or multiple cen-
15 ters, in such country, regardless of whether
16 such country participates in a regional network
17 described in subsection (b).

18 (B) To promote economic connectivity be-
19 tween small business concerns in the United
20 States and economies covered by the Global
21 Small Business Network, including through an
22 internet platform to—

23 (i) enhance the ability of small busi-
24 ness concerns in the United States to take
25 part in international commerce; and

1 (ii) facilitate the growth of small busi-
2 nesses in foreign countries through the de-
3 velopment of small business development
4 centers in foreign countries.

5 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
6 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State
7 \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026,
8 in addition to amounts otherwise available for economic
9 activities and foreign assistance, to carry out this section.
10 With respect to each such fiscal year, the Secretary is au-
11 thorized to use—

12 (1) up to \$1,000,000 of such amount to estab-
13 lish and operate the Small Business Network of the
14 Americas; and

15 (2) up to \$1,000,000 of such amount to estab-
16 lish and operate the ASEAN Small Business Net-
17 work.

18 (e) REPORT.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
20 after the date of enactment of this Act and every
21 two years thereafter for a period of four years, the
22 Secretary of State, in consultation with the Adminis-
23 trator of the United States Agency for International
24 Development and the Administrator of the Small
25 Business Administration, shall submit to the Com-

1 mittee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives, the Committee on Foreign Relations of
3 the Senate, the Committee on Small Business of the
4 House of Representatives, and the Committee on
5 Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate
6 a report on the status of the Global Small Business
7 Network program.

8 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by para-
9 graph (1) shall include the following:

10 (A) An assessment of support provided to
11 small business concerns in the United States
12 that have utilized programs through the Global
13 Small Business Network, including information
14 on the number of businesses supported, the geo-
15 graphic location of such businesses, the number
16 of jobs supported, and the amount of economic
17 activity generated.

18 (B) A description of methods and strate-
19 gies to develop small business development cen-
20 ters in foreign countries for the two years after
21 the date of such report.

22 (C) A list, and the current status, of all
23 operating small business development centers in
24 foreign countries that are affiliated with the
25 Global Small Business Network program.

1 (D) A list, and the current status, of all
2 new small business development centers in for-
3 eign countries set up through the Global Small
4 Business Network program in the two years be-
5 fore the date of the report, even if no longer af-
6 filiated with the Global Small Business Network
7 program.

8 (E) A description of the estimated
9 timelines for national and local governments of
10 a foreign country participating in the Small
11 Business Network of the Americas and the
12 ASEAN Small Business Network to—

13 (i) complete the creation of a small
14 business development center in such coun-
15 try; and

16 (ii) establish connections between such
17 a small business development center with
18 small business development centers in the
19 United States.

20 (F) A description of international commer-
21 cial activity resulting from participation in the
22 Global Small Business Network program.

23 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) QUALIFIED ENTITY.—The term “qualified
25 entity” means an entity that is—

1 (A) an institution of higher education (as
2 such term is defined in section 102 of the High-
3 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)),
4 except that such term does not include institu-
5 tions described in section 102(a)(1)(c) of such
6 Act;

7 (B) a consortium of two or more institu-
8 tions of higher education described in subpara-
9 graph (A); or

10 (C) a nonprofit entity with experience in
11 operating or working with small business devel-
12 opment centers in the United States.

13 (2) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term
14 “small business concern” has the meaning given the
15 term under section 3(a) of the Small Business Act
16 (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

17 (3) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CEN-
18 TER.—The term “small business development cen-
19 ter”—

20 (A) with respect to a center located in the
21 United States—

22 (i) has the meaning given such term
23 in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15
24 U.S.C. 632); and

1 (ii) includes a women’s business cen-
2 ter, as such term is used under section 29
3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
4 656); and

5 (B) with respect to a center located in a
6 foreign country, means an entity that—

7 (i) provides small business-oriented
8 employment or natural resources develop-
9 ment programs;

10 (ii) promotes studies, research, and
11 counseling concerning the managing, fi-
12 nancing, and operation of small businesses;

13 (iii) provides management and tech-
14 nical assistance regarding small business
15 participation in international markets and
16 international commerce, including with the
17 United States;

18 (iv) provides delivery or distribution of
19 services and information described in this
20 subparagraph; or

21 (v) provides access to business ana-
22 lysts who can refer a small business to
23 available experts.

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