

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CHRISTEL SLAUGHTER, PhD, CHAIR
SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

TOM SULLIVAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chairwoman
Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Chabot
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Statement for the Record; Hearing on the Impact of Coronavirus on America's Small Businesses

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Chabot:

Thank you for holding the hearing today entitled, "The Impact of Coronavirus on America's Small Businesses."

I am Christel Slaughter, Ph.D., CEO of SSA Consultants based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and I serve as Chair of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Council. The Small Business Council works to ensure the views of small business are considered as part of the Chamber's policy-making process.

On behalf of the Chamber, thank you for working in an expeditious and bipartisan manner to pass H.R. 6074, the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act last week. Because of Congress and the President's quick action, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can provide \$7 billion in low-interest loans to small businesses impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19). We supported this legislation and view today's hearing as an important oversight function to help guide the effective distribution of resources made available under the \$8.3 billion package.¹

On Friday, March 6, the Chamber launched four task forces to prepare businesses for any potential long-term economic effects of the coronavirus. In addition to the task forces on Employee Support, Business Operational and Revenue Disruption, and Supply Chain and Trade Disruption, a task force will focus exclusively on addressing the unique needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

¹ U.S. Chamber Letter on H.R. 6074, the "Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020," (March 4, 2020). Available at: <https://www.uschamber.com/letters-congress/us-chamber-letter-hr-6074-the-coronavirus-preparedness-and-response-supplemental>.

The Chamber is ensuring the business community is ready for any scenario, but urges that the response to the coronavirus is grounded in facts, not driven by fear. The Chamber's website² is designed to be a resource for business leaders and others, linking to the latest CDC information and state and local health officials. The Chamber believes that businesses, working with government, can help instill the confidence and calm that is necessary both to contain the coronavirus and maintain economic growth.

The coronavirus was certainly part of the conversation at our Small Business Council meeting yesterday in Miami. As business owners, we are laser focused on working to ensure the safety of our employees and, at the same time, ensure continuity of operations. I am proud that the Chamber continues to operate at 100 percent. In addition to our Small Business Council meeting in Miami, the Chamber is holding events in Austin, Minneapolis, Jacksonville, and San Diego this week.

Thank you for holding today's hearing. Tom Sullivan, who heads our Small Business Council, will follow-up with the Committee on the progress of our Small and Medium Enterprises Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christel Slaughter".

Christel Slaughter, PhD
CEO
SSA Consultants
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

cc: Members of the Committee on Small Business

² www.uschamber.com/coronavirus