

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEIL L. BRADLEY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &
CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

1615 H STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20062
(202) 463-5310

December 2, 2020

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges you to cosponsor S. 4873, the “Reaching America’s Rural Minority Businesses Act of 2020,” important legislation that would expand and extend education, training, and technical assistance opportunities to rural minority businesses. We applaud the leadership of Sen. Roger Wicker and the bipartisan group of original cosponsors, Sens. Tim Kaine, Tim Scott, Thom Tillis, and Chris Coons. Senators who cosponsor this legislation will receive credit for the Leadership component of the Chamber’s *“How They Voted”* Congressional scorecard.

According to the Small Business Administration, in 2018, small businesses in rural counties saw 20% less growth than those in metropolitan counties.¹ The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this discrepancy. The year-over-year decline in business activity among Black business owners has been nearly three times the decline among white business owners, and two times the decline among other minority owners.² This bill would authorize the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to establish up to ten business centers at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to serve rural and underserved communities.

Earlier this year, the Chamber launched the Equality of Opportunity Initiative to develop real, sustainable solutions to help close race-based opportunity gaps in four areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, and criminal justice. Systemic inequalities in these four areas perpetuate broader inequalities in our society, hold back individual and business success, and hinder economic growth. As part of this effort, the Chamber is identifying specific legislative solutions it is encouraging Congress to enact.

We applaud the leadership of Sens. Wicker, Kaine, Scott, Tillis, and Coons, in crafting this important bipartisan legislation, and we strongly encourage you to cosponsor this bill.

Sincerely,



Neil L. Bradley

¹ <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/04111621/Rural-Business-Growth-Fact-Sheet1.pdf>

² <https://cdn.advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/31083212/Black-Business-Owners-Hit-Hard-By-Pandemic.pdf>