

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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August 2, 2021

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges you to support S. 1749, the “Reaching America’s Rural Minority Businesses Act.” This important legislation would expand and extend education, training, and technical assistance opportunities to rural minority businesses. **Members who cosponsor this legislation will receive credit for the Leadership component of the Chamber’s “How They Voted” 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.

In June 2020, the Chamber launched the [Equality of Opportunity Initiative](#) to develop real, sustainable solutions to help close race-based opportunity gaps in six areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, criminal justice, health, and wealth disparities. Systemic inequalities in these six 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. Roger Wicker and Tim Kaine, Tim Scott, Thom Tillis, and Chris Coons for reintroducing this 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>