

**Statement for Introduction of the
Small Business Trade Representation Act of 2009
Senator Olympia J. Snowe
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Small Business
December 9, 2009**

Ms. Snowe. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague, Senate Small Business Committee Chair Landrieu, to introduce the “Small Business Trade Representation Act of 2009.” This bipartisan measure would once and for all establish an Assistant United States Trade Representative for Small Business, to ensure that small businesses are represented in trade negotiations and in U.S. trade policy.

I first introduced legislation in 2001, in the 107th Congress, to establish a United States Trade Representative for Small Business, in order to ensure that small business interests are reflected in U.S. trade policy and trade agreement negotiations. Since that time, we’ve heard excuse after excuse, from Administrations of both parties, about why we don’t need an Assistant USTR for Small Business. Currently, less than one percent of all small businesses are exporting their goods and services to foreign customers. Until we see significant gains in small business participation in international trade, we must make it a priority across the Federal government – and especially in our trade policy – to help small businesses compete in the global marketplace.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and as a senior member of both the Senate Finance and Commerce Committees, one of my top priorities is to ensure that small businesses get the promised benefits of our international trade relationships and are able to compete in the world economy.

While globalization has created opportunities for U.S. small businesses to sell their goods and services in new markets, not enough small businesses are taking advantage of these international prospects. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, less than one percent of the approximately 27 million U.S. small businesses currently sell their products to foreign buyers. Small businesses are a vital source of economic growth and job creation, generating nearly two-thirds of net new jobs each year. Small businesses are essential to our economic recovery, and we must help them take advantage of all potential opportunities, including those in foreign markets.

Small businesses can survive, diversify, and compete effectively in the international marketplace by developing an export business. But, as I mentioned, too few small businesses are expanding into international markets. This legislation will help ensure that small businesses are a priority in the U.S. government's trade policy and in future trade agreements.

We cannot overlook the impact of trade on small businesses. An investment in small business exporting assistance is an investment in our economy. I ask all of my Senate colleagues to support this vital legislation.

Mr. President, I request unanimous consent that a copy of the bill and my remarks be printed at the appropriate place in the Congressional Record.