



August 30, 2022

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Small Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Small Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cardin, and Ranking Member Paul:

On behalf of the [Association for Enterprise Opportunity](https://www.aeoworks.org) (AEO), the leading voice of innovation in microfinance and microbusiness in the United States, I write to provide our endorsement of the *Federal Contracting Fairness Act of 2022*.

AEO, and its network of more than 2,700 members and partners provide increased support for entrepreneurship, capital access, opportunity, technical assistance, and job creation for small and microbusinesses in low-and moderate-income (LMI) communities.

The *Federal Contracting Fairness Act* makes critical improvements to the Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program by creating a ramp up period for newly certified businesses, increasing existing sole source award caps, incentivizing participation in the mentor protégé program and streamlining administrative processes among 8(a) applicants and award seekers. AEO is particularly pleased to see increased attention to contract opportunities in the research and development and higher education spaces by incentivizing higher sole source awards; these categories will incentivize greater innovation and growth for our data-driven and innovative microbusinesses seeking to do business with the federal government. Additionally, the legislation implements necessary reporting requirements that would make public disaggregated data by demographic and business size on firms participating in the 8(a) program. The reporting component is so critical for our microbusiness community, especially those owned by minorities, to ensure that small and minority-owned businesses can full reap the benefits of this program as intended.

We thank Chair Cardin for his dedication to ensuring that America's small business community continues to receive support during an increasingly difficult economic time. On behalf of over 2,700 organizations, partners, lenders, and organizations that work hard every day to support America's microbusiness and microfinance economy, we thank you for your dedication to ensuring that the hardest hit businesses gain access to desperately needed capital as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please feel free to contact me at [cevens@aeoworks.org](mailto:cevens@aeoworks.org) if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Connie E. Evans'.

Connie E. Evans,  
President & CEO  
Association for Enterprise Opportunity  
**Cc: Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship**