

**Isabella Casillas Guzman**  
**Nominee; Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration**  
**Written Testimony, U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business &**  
**Entrepreneurship**  
**Wednesday, February 3, 2021**  
**10:30 a.m.**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Good Morning Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Cardin, Members of the Committee – it is an honor to appear before you today.

As a product of and lifelong advocate for America’s small business community, I am honored and profoundly grateful that President Biden has nominated me to serve as the next Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Now more than ever, I am deeply committed to helping support our nation’s small businesses and entrepreneurs and would be proud to lead the SBA and help small businesses start, operate, grow, and be resilient.

Let me tell you about my background. I grew up in a small business family in California – visiting and working with my dad at his veterinary hospital.

What I remember more than anything: I loved the connection he had with the clients he served every day. At a young age, I experienced firsthand how important small business owners are to the communities they serve and why we rightly call them the fabric of our neighborhoods. They enliven our main streets, create the products and services that enrich our lives, and innovate to solve the world’s problems.

If confirmed, I pledge to serve as their voice and represent the enormous diversity across our small businesses – from independent contractors and sole proprietors to startups and innovative technology and science-based firms to main street and manufacturing – of all sizes and all stages of development.

At over 30 million strong, small businesses power our economy – they represent vastly all of our nation’s total businesses and employ nearly half of the private workforce.

But they are facing an unprecedented crisis and need our support to survive and thrive again. As this committee knows so well, small businesses across the country

have been devastated by the pandemic and economic downturn. I feel a sense of urgency that we need to work harder than ever, think more creatively than ever, and build more collaboration than ever to meet this moment.

Throughout my career I have started businesses and helped entrepreneurs launch and grow their firms, and I appreciate and understand the challenges they face every day. We all know a small business owner who works so hard – wearing multiple hats to tenaciously pursue their dreams.

As California's current Small Business Advocate, I have also seen the impossible situations and intense frustrations small business owners are experiencing as they attempt to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have experienced revenue drops, increasing debt and shrinking cash flows as a result of the health and safety guidance and lockdown restrictions.

Small businesses need a team behind them. SBA must be a part of that team – helping them access capital, and connecting them to marketplaces to build revenues and networks that can help them navigate resources to improve outcomes so that they can do what they do best: create our nation's jobs and help spur our economy.

I am confident that I can hit the ground running and deliver the recovery policies of the Administration and this committee.

President Biden is committed to addressing inequities in our economy and providing relief to those who are struggling during the pandemic. He has focused on building our economy back better and strengthening our small businesses.

And, America's small businesses are counting on effective and equitable implementation of COVID-19 relief and recovery programs passed by Congress and implemented by the SBA. Because their survival is at risk.

If confirmed, I would leverage my prior experience serving in leadership at the SBA and commit to working diligently to be a good steward of its programs. I am committed to ensuring the agency has the right systems, technology and operating processes in place to advance its mission and reach *all* our small businesses. Most importantly, I will work to ensure funds get into the hands of the small businesses who have been hurt the most by the pandemic and economic crisis through no fault of their own.

I also pledge to be transparent, responsive, and accessible to this committee about SBA's operations and needs.

President Biden has committed to advancing racial justice and equity for all Americans. If confirmed, I am committed to helping the SBA advance opportunity for *all* including our underserved entrepreneurs who have faced historic barriers to start and grow their businesses.

I am deeply honored by the President's nomination and look forward to getting to work immediately with the mission-driven civil servants at the SBA to help all of America's small businesses build better futures for their families and communities. Their success is our country's success.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the Committee's questions.