

John	Mollohan	Shakowsky
Johnson (CT)	Moore	Schiff
Johnson (IL)	Moran (KS)	Schrock
Johnson, E. B.	Murphy	Scott (GA)
Johnson, Sam	Murtha	Scott (VA)
Jones (NC)	Musgrave	Serrano
Jones (OH)	Myrick	Shaw
Kanjorski	Napolitano	Shays
Kaptur	Neal (MA)	Sherman
Keller	Nethercutt	Sherwood
Kelly	Ney	Shimkus
Kennedy (MN)	Northup	Shuster
Kennedy (RI)	Norwood	Simmons
Kildee	Nunes	Simpson
Kilpatrick	Nussle	Skelton
Kind	Oberstar	Slaughter
King (IA)	Obey	Smith (NJ)
King (NY)	Olver	Smith (TX)
Kingston	Ortiz	Smith (WA)
Kirk	Osborne	Snyder
Klecзка	Ose	Solis
Kline	Otter	Souder
Knollenberg	Owens	Spratt
Kolbe	Oxley	Stark
Kucinich	Pallone	Stenholm
LaHood	Pascrell	Strickland
Lampson	Pastor	Sullivan
Langevin	Paul	Sweeney
Lantos	Pearce	Tancredo
Larsen (WA)	Pelosi	Tanner
Larson (CT)	Pence	Tauscher
Latham	Peterson (MN)	Tauzin
LaTourette	Peterson (PA)	Taylor (MS)
Leach	Petri	Terry
Lee	Pickering	Thomas
Levin	Pitts	Thompson (CA)
Lewis (GA)	Platts	Thompson (MS)
Lewis (KY)	Pombo	Thornberry
Linder	Pomeroy	Tiaht
Lipinski	Porter	Tiberi
LoBiondo	Portman	Tierney
Lofgren	Price (NC)	Toomey
Lowey	Pryce (OH)	Towns
Lucas (KY)	Putnam	Turner (OH)
Lynch	Quinn	Turner (TX)
Majette	Radanovich	Rahall
Maloney	Rahall	Udall (CO)
Manzullo	Ramstad	Udall (NM)
Markey	Rangel	Upton
Marshall	Regula	Van Hollen
Matheson	Rehberg	Velazquez
McCarthy (NY)	Renzi	Visclosky
McCollum	Reyes	Vitter
McCotter	Reynolds	Walden (OR)
McCrery	Rodriguez	Walsh
McDermott	Rogers (AL)	Wamp
McGovern	Rogers (KY)	Waters
McHugh	Rogers (MI)	Watson
McInnis	Ros-Lehtinen	Watt
McIntyre	Ross	Waxman
McKeon	Rothman	Weiner
McNulty	Roybal-Allard	Weldon (FL)
Meehan	Royce	Weller
Meek (FL)	Ruppersberger	Wexler
Meeks (NY)	Rush	Whitfield
Menendez	Ryan (OH)	Wicker
Mica	Ryan (WI)	Wilson (NM)
Michaud	Ryun (KS)	Wilson (SC)
Millender-	Sabo	Wolf
McDonald	Sanchez, Linda	Woolsey
Miller (FL)	T.	Wu
Miller (MI)	Sanchez, Loretta	Wynn
Miller (NC)	Sanders	Young (AK)
Miller, Gary	Sandlin	Young (FL)
Miller, George	Saxton	

□ 1347

Mr. MILLER of Florida changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1119

Mr. SIMMONS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1119.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2003

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 205) to amend the Small Business Act to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a program to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small business concerns, and for other purposes

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 205

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a program to—

- (1) provide confidential assistance to small business concerns;
- (2) provide small business concerns with the information necessary to improve their rate of compliance with Federal and State regulations;
- (3) create a partnership among Federal agencies to increase outreach efforts to small business concerns with respect to regulatory compliance;
- (4) provide a mechanism for unbiased feedback to Federal agencies on the regulatory environment for small business concerns; and
- (5) utilize the service delivery network of Small Business Development Centers to improve access of small business concerns to programs to assist them with regulatory compliance.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, the definitions set forth in section 36(a) of the Small Business Act (as added by section 4 of this Act) shall apply.

SEC. 4. SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637 et seq.) is amended—

- (1) by redesignating section 36 as section 37; and
- (2) by inserting after section 35 the following new section:

"SEC. 36. SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

"(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, acting through the Associate Administrator for Small Business Development Centers.

"(2) ASSOCIATION.—The term 'Association' means the association recognized by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration under section 21(a)(3)(A).

"(3) PARTICIPATING SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term 'participating Small Business Development Center' means a Small Business Development Center participating in the program.

"(4) PROGRAM.—The term 'program' means the regulatory assistance program established under this section.

"(5) REGULATORY COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE.—The term 'regulatory compliance assistance' means assistance provided by a Small Business Development Center to a small business concern to enable the concern to comply with Federal regulatory requirements.

"(6) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term 'Small Business Development Center' means a Small Business Development Center described in section 21.

"(7) STATE.—The term 'State' means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

"(b) AUTHORITY.—In accordance with this section, the Administrator shall establish a program to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small business concerns through participating Small Business Development Centers, the Association, and Federal compliance partnership programs.

"(c) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Administrator shall enter into arrangements with participating Small Business Development Centers under which such centers will provide—

"(A) access to information and resources, including current Federal and State non-punitive compliance and technical assistance programs similar to those established under section 507 of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990;

"(B) training and educational activities;

"(C) confidential, free-of-charge, one-on-one, in-depth counseling to the owners and operators of small business concerns regarding compliance with Federal and State regulations, provided that such counseling is not considered to be the practice of law in a State in which a Small Business Development Center is located or in which such counseling is conducted;

"(D) technical assistance; and

"(E) referrals to experts and other providers of compliance assistance who meet such standards for educational, technical, and professional competency as are established by the Administrator.

"(2) REPORTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Each participating Small Business Development Center shall transmit to the Administrator a quarterly report that includes—

"(i) a summary of the regulatory compliance assistance provided by the center under the program; and

"(ii) any data and information obtained by the center from a Federal agency regarding regulatory compliance that the agency intends to be disseminated to small business concerns.

"(B) ELECTRONIC FORM.—Each report referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be transmitted in electronic form.

"(C) INTERIM REPORTS.—A participating Small Business Development Center may transmit to the Administrator such interim reports as the center considers appropriate.

NAYS—8

Flake	Sensenbrenner	Smith (MI)
Franks (AZ)	Sessions	Stearns
Rohrabacher	Shadegg	

NOT VOTING—20

Brown, Corrine	Honda	McCarthy (MO)
Brown-Waite,	Hulshof	Moran (VA)
Ginny	Hyde	Nadler
Combest	Jenkins	Payne
Davis, Tom	Lewis (CA)	Stupak
Gephardt	Lucas (OK)	Taylor (NC)
Gerlach	Matsui	Weldon (PA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) (during the vote). Members are reminded that there are less than 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

“(D) LIMITATION ON DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.—The Administrator may not require a Small Business Development Center to disclose the name or address of any small business concern that received or is receiving assistance under the program, except that the Administrator shall require such a disclosure if ordered to do so by a court in any civil or criminal action.

“(d) DATA REPOSITORY AND CLEARINGHOUSE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Administrator shall—

“(A) act as the repository of and clearinghouse for data and information submitted by Small Business Development Centers; and

“(B) transmit to the President, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives an annual report that includes—

“(i) a description of the types of assistance provided by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program;

“(ii) data regarding the number of small business concerns that contacted participating Small Business Development Centers regarding assistance under the program;

“(iii) data regarding the number of small business concerns assisted by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program;

“(iv) data and information regarding outreach activities conducted by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program, including any activities conducted in partnership with Federal agencies;

“(v) data and information regarding each case known to the Administrator in which one or more Small Business Development Centers offered conflicting advice or information regarding compliance with a Federal or State regulation to one or more small business concerns;

“(vi) any recommendations for improvements in the regulation of small business concerns; and

“(vii) a list of regulations identified by the Administrator, after consultation with the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman, as being most burdensome to small business concerns, and recommendations to reduce or eliminate the burdens of such regulations.

“(e) ELIGIBILITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A Small Business Development Center shall be eligible to receive assistance under the program only if the center is certified under section 21(k)(2).

“(2) WAIVER.—With respect to a Small Business Development Center seeking assistance under the program, the administrator may waive the certification requirement set forth in paragraph (1) if the Administrator determines that the center is making a good faith effort to obtain such certification.

“(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The restriction described in paragraph (1) shall not apply to any Small Business Development Center before October 1, 2003.

“(f) SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING STATE PROGRAMS.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—In consultation with the Association and giving substantial weight to the Association's recommendations, the Administrator shall select the Small Business Development Center programs of 2 States from each of the following groups of States to participate in the program:

“(A) Group 1: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, and Rhode Island.

“(B) Group 2: New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

“(C) Group 3: Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Delaware.

“(D) Group 4: Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

“(E) Group 5: Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

“(F) Group 6: Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

“(G) Group 7: Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

“(H) Group 8: Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Utah.

“(I) Group 9: California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, and Arizona.

“(J) Group 10: Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon.

“(2) DEADLINE FOR INITIAL SELECTIONS.—The Administrator shall make selections under paragraph (1) not later than 60 days after promulgation of regulations under section 5 of the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2003.

“(3) ADDITIONAL SELECTIONS.—Not earlier than the date 3 years after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator may select Small Business Development Center programs of States in addition to those selected under paragraph (1). The Administrator shall consider the effect on the programs selected under paragraph (1) before selecting additional programs under this paragraph.

“(4) COORDINATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—In selecting programs under this subsection, the Administrator shall give a preference to Small Business Development Center programs that have a plan for consulting with Federal and State agencies to ensure that any assistance provided under this section is not duplicated by an existing Federal or State program.

“(g) MATCHING NOT REQUIRED.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 21(a)(4) shall not apply to assistance made available under the program.

“(h) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each State program selected to receive a grant under subsection (f) in a fiscal year shall be eligible to receive a grant in an amount not to exceed the product obtained by multiplying—

“(A) the amount made available for grants under this section for the fiscal year; and

“(B) the ratio that—

“(i) the population of the State; bears to

“(ii) the population of all the States with programs selected to receive grants under subsection (f) for the fiscal year.

“(2) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—The minimum amount that a State program selected to receive a grant under subsection (f) shall be eligible to receive under this section for any fiscal year shall be \$200,000. The Administrator shall reduce the amount described in paragraph (1) as appropriate to carry out the purposes of this paragraph and subsection (j)(2).

“(i) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the establishment of the program, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an evaluation of the program and shall transmit to the Administrator, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report containing the results of the evaluation along with any recommendations as to whether the program, with or without modification, should be extended to include the participation of all Small Business Development Centers.

“(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2003 and each fiscal year thereafter.

“(2) LIMITATION ON USE OF OTHER FUNDS.—The Administrator may carry out the pro-

gram only with amounts appropriated in advance specifically to carry out this section.”.

SEC. 5. PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS.

After providing notice and an opportunity for comment and after consulting with the Association (but not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act), the Administrator shall promulgate final regulations to carry out this Act, including regulations that establish—

(1) priorities for the types of assistance to be provided under the program;

(2) standards relating to educational, technical, and support services to be provided by participating Small Business Development Centers;

(3) standards relating to any national service delivery and support function to be provided by the Association under the program;

(4) standards relating to any work plan that the Administrator may require a participating Small Business Development Center to develop; and

(5) standards relating to the educational, technical, and professional competency of any expert or other assistance provider to whom a small business concern may be referred for compliance assistance under the program.

SEC. 6. PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.

Section 21(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(9) PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—No Small Business Development Center, consortium of Small Business Development Centers, or contractor or agent of a Small Business Development Center shall disclose the name or address of any individual or small business concern receiving assistance under this section without the consent of such individual or small business concern, except that—

“(i) the Administrator shall require such disclosure if ordered to do so by a court in any civil or criminal action; and

“(ii) if the Administrator considers it necessary while undertaking a financial audit of a Small Business Development Center, the Administrator shall require such disclosure for the sole purpose of undertaking such audit.

“(B) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator shall issue regulations to establish standards for requiring disclosures during a financial audit under subparagraph (a)(ii).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, H.R. 205 is identical to legislation this House passed unanimously on October 2, 2001. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass the Senate last year. We are here today to try again.

H.R. 205 was so strongly supported by the Committee on Small Business that

both the ranking member and I decided to skip the markup process and bring this bill straight to the House floor. It contains all the compromises within our committee and with the Senate. For those interested in the legislative history of the bill, I would encourage them to examine the committee's report from the 107th Congress on H.R. 205.

This bill is designed to help small businesses cope with the maze of Federal, State and local regulations that have created such a heavy burden on Main Street America. Every day we all receive complaints from our constituents about their inability to understand regulations that are written in legalese rather than in plain English and about arbitrary actions taken by some regulatory agencies.

Instead of creating a new program, H.R. 205 uses the existing Small Business Development Center network to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses. The SBDC network has a good track record with small businesses. Because many small business owners fear going to regulatory agencies for compliance advice, SBDCs can serve as a buffer so that small business can receive the hands-on assistance it needs without retribution.

Already this fiscal year, the Small Business Administration received an additional \$1 million appropriation for SBDCs to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses. H.R. 205 simply builds upon this initial first step. In addition, the legislation includes enhanced privacy protections for small business clients of SBDCs.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 205.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in strong support of H.R. 205, the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2003, which would establish a regulatory compliance assistance program to this Nation's small businesses. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY) for his hard work on this issue and congratulate him for bringing this bill to the floor.

With the American economy still struggling, it is now more important than ever to make it easier for small businesses, this Nation's economic backbone, to expand. In today's business environment, one of the greatest obstacles standing in the way of growth for many of this Nation's small businesses is regulatory compliance. Small businesses regularly find themselves lost in the maze of Federal regulations that are designed to create safer and healthier workplaces.

In fact, regulatory burdens are typically ranked as a top concern for small businesses, and the Small Business Administration estimates those burdens cost almost \$7,000 per employee per

year. That is 60 percent higher than costs for businesses with more than 500 employees.

Small firms are less equipped to deal with regulations than large corporations. Business owners want to comply with regulations because they know that a safe and healthy workplace makes them more productive, but often they do not know how to comply or where to start.

With the adoption of this legislation, we take a big step in helping our Nation's small businesses to navigate the regulatory process with passage of the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act. This legislation establishes a 3-year pilot program to provide confidential and nonpunitive advice to small businesses that are trying to weather a blizzard of complex Federal regulations.

Business owners sometimes fear approaching agencies for compliance assistance because these are the very agencies charged with enforcement. They worry, Can I talk about OSHA requirements with the labor Department? Can I discuss environmental regulations with the EPA?

By creating a compliance program through the Small Business Development Centers national network, we will provide a neutral, non-threatening environment small business owners use to get important information and advice without fear of retaliation.

The SBDCs, which have a solid reputation for aiding local enterprise, already provide counseling, training and education. This legislation creates a one-stop shop for regulatory compliance that will help small business owners who want to do the right thing to do the right thing.

In addition, this legislation would establish a database clearinghouse for information gathered by the SBDCs based on their interaction with local businesses. This data will be useful in further identifying the compliance needs of small business and tailoring assistance to them.

While SBDCs provide more compliance assistance and gather more information, we must ensure that the sensitive information brought forward by small business is kept absolutely confidential. This legislation guarantees privacy for those who receive compliance assistance and extends these protections to all small businesses that seek any assistance from their local SBDC.

This legislation bars the sharing of information that any SBDC collects on a business with any third body or agency. This will guarantee that small businesses receive the assistance they need in complete confidence and privacy.

Madam Speaker, we want all our small businesses to comply with the regulations that preserve the health, environment, and well-being of our workers and our communities; but oftentimes, small businesses do not have access to the resources they need if they want to comply with regulations

in good faith. With the adoption of this legislation, we are giving small businesses the support they need to navigate the often complex realm of Federal regulations.

In closing, let me thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY) for this bill. I strongly urge the adoption of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Sometime ago, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY) came to me and said, Chairman, I have got a very interesting piece of legislation; and I took a look at it, and this is the type of legislation that really helps out small business people.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY) is the former labor commissioner for the State of New York, undoubtedly proud of Syracuse, and even though I am a graduate of Marquette, I am still here supporting the bill.

He explained how difficult it is, and I agree with him, for small business people to understand the web of regulations. He has experience in the private/public sector.

Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from the Empire State (Mr. SWEENEY), whose idea fostered this legislation.

Mr. SWEENEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for recognizing me; but more particularly, I would like to thank the chairman for his persistence in pursuing this matter.

As he mentioned, several years ago, I introduced the original of H.R. 205, the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act, passed it through the Committee on Small Business, passed it through the floor here; and unfortunately, we were not able to get the bill passed through the Senate and get our work completed.

The Chairman has stayed with us on this issue, and through his diligence we have been able to get it back on the floor, and I want to thank my friend and ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), because I know she, too, has been very committed and very persistent in pursuing this matter; and I am very, very thankful.

Madam Speaker, we strive in this era, in this time to find different ways to help the American economy as we travel down the road to recovery. We try to find ways that we can instill public confidence in our economy; and I think it is imperative that we in Congress, despite all of the other activity going on around us, continue to work in small ways and large ways and in any way we can to help the American economy.

□ 1400

And I think this bill really is an effort on the part of this House to make a concerted effort to aid the cornerstone of the American economy, and

that is the small business. The spirit of entrepreneurship is really a characteristic specifically unique to America. Recognized in that spirit is really the heroism and the important role that small business entrepreneurs and proprietors provide for the American economy in terms of jobs, opportunity, and even technology.

As Members of Congress, we receive the Federal Register daily in our offices. Though these documents are filed for safekeeping and reference, they are rarely poured over for specific details. However, for the average small business owner to understand his or her legal obligations as entrepreneurs trying to create these jobs, they have to be carefully analyzed, the Federal Register, that is, to understand the ever-changing regulations to which the businesses are subjected.

I believe additional measures need to be taken to better assist small business owners in their compliance with Federal guidelines and statutes. H.R. 205 relieves the burden shouldered by the average small business owner throughout America.

In the 106th Congress, Mr. Speaker, this body passed the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act as a pilot program. In the 107th Congress, both the House and the Senate adopted versions of this bill, though they are nonconforming, and as I said before, no final action was taken before Congress adjourned. I was encouraged by the bipartisan enthusiasm for this program and have conferred with our colleagues in the Senate to work out technical disagreements with prior language, so it is my hope that H.R. 205 will receive the approval of both the House and the Senate in the near future so as to move forward in our efforts to increase the lifespan of American small businesses.

In the 108th Congress, the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act will function as a permanent project, not a pilot program. This legislation will establish small business compliance centers in 20 American States and territories. These facilities will provide assistance to small business owners, allowing them to better comply with regulatory guidelines and ease the burden of critical yet over-worked small business development centers. It is important to note that H.R. 205 will not replace current regulatory compliance programs but complement them.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Administration does an exceptional job promoting the development of enterprise in our country. However, the current structure can only do so much. We need to better serve the small business community once they are given a leg to stand on. The Federal Government has invested a great deal in America's courageous entrepreneurs. By providing small business owners the necessary assistance to comply with ever-changing regulations, Congress will solidify the very foundation of the American economy.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I urge all my colleagues to support and pass H.R. 205, this bill, and I want to once again recognize the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for their great work and their persistence in staying with this bill and this idea.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I want to join in the remarks of my colleague from New York in thanking both my ranking minority member and my chair on the Committee on Small Business, a committee that I am very proud and happy to serve on, for their great bipartisan efforts. I also again thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY) for allowing me to cosponsor what I think is a very important bill for small businesses in our country.

I do not think we have to recite at any great length that small business is in fact the engine of our economy. This is especially true in Hawaii where small businesses represent 97 percent of all businesses. And it is not just small business as a category carried by the Federal Government, we are talking about the grassroots of small business in Hawaii. We are talking about businesses where 34 percent have annual sales, gross revenues of under \$250,000, where well over 85 percent of all businesses have 10 or fewer full-time employees, and 69 percent 5 or fewer full-time employees.

When we ask those small businesses what are the challenges they face, no different from anywhere else in our country, they will say that their challenges are taxes and regulations. Now, we can deal with taxes some other place in some other debate, but today we are dealing with regulations. And for a small business, and those of us that have been in small business know this, government regulation means time and it means attorneys. And time and attorneys means money. And money for a small business on a thin margin means the difference between survival and failure. And to take it a step further, that in turn means the difference between government revenues coming about or not. So it is in all of our interests to deal with the regulatory situation, and this bill does that.

Let me give my colleagues a hard core example from my own home State. My big island, my home island, the big Island of Hawaii. There is a region of the Island of Hawaii known as Hamakua. And there is a town in Hamakua known as Honokaa. And Hamakua, as I was growing up on that island, was a sugar community. And Honokaa was a sugar town. And in the last 10 or 15 years, sugar has faded away. As I walk down the streets of Honokaa today, there is a revival; but it is a revival of small business, not of a large scale industry. As I walk down that street, that street is full of small

businesses trying to survive and prosper. They are bringing about a revival of a rural economy in an area that needs to retain its employment.

Now, what concerns them? Taxes and regulation. They do not have great access to explanations of what is and is not the proper Federal Government regulation. They hardly have access to the Federal Register. They do not have too many attorneys in town, even if they could afford to pay them. But they do have a small business development center a few miles away in the town of Hilo. If they can go to that small business development center for free confidential advice on what Federal regulations are, that will make a world of difference to those small businesses, and that town will survive and that region will survive and prosper, and my island will survive and prosper, as will my State and country.

So we can easily see the benefit of this legislation as we go forward. And the benefit of this legislation, again, is to state that basically where our Federal Government does implement and impose regulation on the small businesses of our country, I believe and this legislation says that we also inherit a duty on the part of the Federal Government to ensure that the people that are subject to those regulations understand them and are able to comply with them. These are small businesses that want to comply, but the challenge is to comply fully and with the minimum expenditure of money so that that money can be put into investing in that company and producing tax revenues for all of us.

So this is a good bill. This is a bipartisan bill. This is an example of what we can do together. And again I commend the chair and the ranking minority member of the committee that I am proud to serve on, as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY), and pledge my support to this and urge that it go forward.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, let me commend the chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), for bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the economic engine that drive America because they create three-fourths of all new jobs, employ half our workers, account for half of our gross domestic product, and contribute more than 55 percent of innovations. Small businesses have and will continue to pull the U.S. economy out of recession. They anchor our neighborhoods, employ and train our workers, and take care of our families. They are the reason that the U.S. economy is the strongest in the world.

Despite all their contributions, small businesses face many obstacles. One of

these obstacles is the expanding volumes of regulations where small businesses are mandated to learn and comply with government guidelines. The number of Federal regulations has nearly doubled over the past 20 years. The Federal Register, the resource book of Federal regulatory initiatives and changes, has increased to nearly 80,000 pages. With these kinds of rules and regulations, small businesses are finding themselves confused and often lost in piles of regulatory paperwork. It is difficult in this economy for small businesses to grow and prosper. The excess Federal Government paperwork requirements cost the economy about \$100 billion a year. Much of this cost is paid by small business owners.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reason why I support the passage of H.R. 205, the National Small Business Regulatory Act of 2003. This bill requires the Small Business Administration to enter into an agreement with participating small business development centers to provide small businesses with the information necessary to improve their rate of compliance with Federal and State regulations. Businesses would receive confidential, free, one-on-one, in-depth counseling regarding compliance with Federal and State regulations and would indeed receive referrals to experts and other providers of compliance assistance.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I commend the chairman (Mr. MANZULLO) and the ranking member. I think that this is probably one of the most bipartisan committees in the House. It is a committee that does indeed work well together and it is indeed a committee that turns out legislation like this bill that I am pleased to support.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 205, The National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2003. This bill amends the Small Business Act to direct the establishment of a program which would provide regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses through participating Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), the Association for SBDCs, and Federal compliance partnership programs.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I on the Small Business Committee have dedicated much time and energy to addressing the issue small business' burden of complying with federal regulations. One of the greatest challenges facing small business owners is understanding and affording their regulatory requirements. Often, small businesses are so heavily penalized for non-compliance with regulatory requirements, that they are forced out of business. Imagine being a small business, in the current state of our economy, and being faced with paying a \$73,000.00 penalty for not submitting enough "supporting documentation." Mr. Speaker, this is not hypothetical—it is reality.

The House Small Business Committee has held many hearings to examine the myriad of regulations that small businesses are subjected to. For example, it is estimated that the

Medicaid/Medicare program, alone, has over 100,000 pages of laws and regulations. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services has over 200 forms that generate 1.7 million annual responses from health care providers. These forms consume over 100 million hours every year that health care providers could have been using to treat patients.

Committee and Member staff often serve as an intermediary between small businesses and the federal government in resolving federal regulatory compliance issues. What we are doing in this bill is expanding the scope of the SBDC network to educate small business owners to ensure greater compliance of federal regulations. There are more than 1,000 SBDC service locations in the United States, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. By using the SBDC network to conduct this pilot program, H.R. 205 ensures that American entrepreneurs receive regulatory information in a proven vessel.

Last Congress, this legislation passed the House but did not get signed into law. I continued support until we are finally able to adopt this into law. I would also like to commend Representative SWEENEY for continuing to move this bill forward.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 205.

I support H.R. 205 because the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2003 establishes valuable programs that help America's small businesses and entrepreneurs.

H.R. 205 helps small businesses by establishing a program that provides confidential assistance to small business concerns, and provides small businesses with the information needed to improve their compliance with Federal and State regulatory agencies.

H.R. 205 also enhances the role of federal and state regulatory agencies by creating a partnership among various Federal agencies to increase outreach efforts to small businesses, and utilizes the service delivery network of Small Business Development Centers to assist small businesses with access to programs and assistance with regulatory compliance.

The positive impact of Small Business Development Centers on small businesses and local economies can be seen by looking at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Houston in my home District.

The University of Houston SBDC provides many services including business management, government procurement, and international trade assistance. It also provides training and consulting services. The Houston SBDC has helped many small businesses excel in Houston's business market. Each year the SBDC gives awards to Houston's Top 100 growing businesses. In 2002, in part because of the efforts of the SBDC, a small business Houston floral products distribution business, Arko Associates, Inc., experienced 191% growth. Another small business Smart Kids Software, an education software firm, experienced 199% growth. Each of these businesses made the Houston Top 100.

These small businesses enhance the quality of life in our local communities.

H.R. 205 provides the services and regulatory compliance assistance to help many small businesses and entrepreneurs stay in business.

I support H.R. 205.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 205.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE U.S.S. "THRESHER"

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 170) recognizing the 40th anniversary of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Thresher*.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 170

Whereas the U.S.S. *Thresher* was first launched at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on July 9, 1960;

Whereas, with a crew of 16 officers, 96 sailors, and 17 civilians, the U.S.S. *Thresher* departed Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for her final voyage on April 9, 1963;

Whereas the military and civilian mix of the U.S.S. *Thresher* crew reflects the unity of the naval submarine service in the protection of the United States;

Whereas at approximately 7:47 a.m. on April 10, 1963, while in communication with the surface ship U.S.S. *Skylark*, and approximately 300 miles off the coast of New England, the U.S.S. *Thresher* began her final descent;

Whereas, on April 10, 1963, the U.S.S. *Thresher* was declared lost with all hands;

Whereas the loss of the U.S.S. *Thresher* gave rise to the SUBSAFE program, which has kept United States' submariners safe at sea as the strongest and safest submarine force in history;

Whereas the loss of the U.S.S. *Thresher* gave rise to an ocean engineering curricula in institutions of higher education that has enabled and sustained the United States' preeminence in submarine warfare; and

Whereas the crew of the U.S.S. *Thresher* demonstrated the "last full measure of devotion" in service to the United States, and this devotion characterizes the sacrifices of all submariners, past and present: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 40th anniversary of the sinking of the U.S.S. *Thresher*;

(2) remembers with profound sorrow the loss on April 10, 1963, of the U.S.S. *Thresher* and her gallant crew of sailors and civilians;

(3) expresses its deepest gratitude to all submariners on "eternal patrol", who are