

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business and that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

 TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor a great American on his retirement. ADM James G. Stavridis will retire at the end of this month after a distinguished Navy career lasting 37 years. During that career, he commanded forces at several levels, including a destroyer, a destroyer squadron, and a carrier strike group.

He has also held significant joint commands, including U.S. Southern Command and, most recently, U.S. European Command, EUCOM, and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. Of note, he was the first Navy officer to command EUCOM.

At EUCOM, Admiral Stavridis had the very difficult task of ensuring that the members of the coalition operating in Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, pulled together as a coherent team to support NATO strategic objectives there. In this position, Admiral Stavridis was a steady voice upon whom we could always rely for an accurate assessment of the facts on the ground.

Admiral Stavridis was a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, the Naval War College, and the National War College. He also was an outstanding student at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, where he earned two degrees: a doctor of philosophy and a master of arts in law and diplomacy.

Admiral Stavridis has been a strong leader of the men and women in his commands, but he has also been a leading strategic thinker with the Department. He has published numerous articles and essays, and has co-authored several books on subjects as diverse as ship handling and foreign policy.

I am pleased that Admiral Stavridis will continue to make his talents available to our country. Admiral Stavridis will assume new roles as dean of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and chairman of the board of the United States Naval Institute.

On behalf of the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I wish Admiral Stavridis "fair winds and following seas" as he approaches a new set of challenges in life. I know he will bring to them the same steady hand, good heart and clear thinking he has given to our Nation for almost four decades.

 MINORITY WEALTH GAP

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, as part of Small Business Week, I would

like to mention a fact that is sometimes overlooked: minorities and women open small businesses at lower rates, and when they are able to open businesses, they earn less than their white counterparts.

We have received many studies from all over the country that look at the utilization of minority- and women-owned businesses by public contracting agencies. As the studies show, minority- and women-owned businesses are routinely and disproportionately underutilized in public contracting. In fact, one report that looked at almost 100 studies showed that regardless of where the study was done or who did it, what was seen over and over again was a stark underutilization of minority and women owned contractors.

Studies and litigation about mortgage rates also show us that minorities face additional, discriminatory hurdles when it comes to borrowing money. Minority business owners are more likely to have loan applications turned down than similar white business owners and, if the minority business owner is lucky enough to get the loan, he or she is more likely to pay a higher interest rate.

Minority and women business owners are less likely to have the wealth to start their own businesses because of a history of discrimination in employment. As a result, when they do start out, they are at a significant disadvantage.

We have also heard repeated testimony that minorities and women are excluded from the networks that are essential for small businesses. Minorities and women are quoted higher prices for supplies or excluded from the meetings or the clubs where contacts are formed and decisions are made.

Federal programs that open doors and require outreach to minority-owned businesses are essential. In fact, when the Federal or local government stops requiring that prime contractors reach out to minority- or women-owned businesses, those businesses' participation in public contracts plummets. For example, when States in the western part of the U.S. stopped their programs after a court decision that invalidated some applications of the program, participation in Federal contracting by minority-owned businesses measurably decreased.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a list of studies that demonstrate these facts.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RECENT EXPERT REPORTS, DISPARITY STUDIES AND CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ADDRESSING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

2013

Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Minority Women, Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 113th Cong. (2013)

2012

Closing the Wealth Gap Through the African-American Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:

Roundtable Discussion with the U.S. House Comm. on Small Business, 112th Cong. (Sept. 9, 2012).

2011

Closing the Gap: Exploring Minority Access to Capital and Contracting Opportunities: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 112th Cong. (2011)

2010

Assessing Access: Obstacles and Opportunities for Minority Small Business Owners in Today's Capital Markets, Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 111th Cong. (2010)

Minority Contracting Opportunities: Challenges for Current and Future Minority-Owned Businesses: Hearing before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight & Gov't Reform, Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization and Procurement, 111 Cong. (Sept. 22, 2010)

Minorities and Women in Financial Regulatory Reform: The Need for Increasing Participation and Opportunities for Qualified Persons and Businesses: Hearing Before the U.S. House Comm. on Financial Services, Subcomm. on Oversight and Investigations and Subcomm. on Housing and Community Opportunity, 111th Cong. (2010)

Full Committee Hearing on Small Business Participation in Federal Procurement Marketplace: Hearing Before the U.S. House Comm. on Small Business, 111th Cong. (2010)

2009

Infrastructure Investment: Ensuring an Effective Economic Recovery Program: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure, 111th Cong. (2009)

The Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2009: Hearing Before the H. Subcomm. on Aviation of the H. Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure, 111th Cong. (2009)

Full Committee Hearing on the State of the SBA's Entrepreneurial Development Programs and Their Role in Promoting an Economic Recovery: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business, 111th Cong. (2009)

Full Committee Hearing on Oversight of the Small Business Administration and its Programs: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Small Business, 111th Cong. (2009)

The Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Transportation and Infrastructure, 111th Cong. (2009)

The Role of Small Business in Recovery Act Contracting: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 111th Cong. (2009)

Trends Affecting Minority Broadcast Ownership: Hearing Before the H. Judiciary Comm., 111th Cong. (2009)

Roundtable on Healthcare Reform: Small Business Concerns and Priorities: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 111th Cong. (2009)

Doing Business with the Government: The RECORD and Goals for Small, Minority and Disadvantaged Businesses: Hearing Before the H. Comm. On Transportation and Infrastructure, 111th Cong. (2009)

Minority Entrepreneurship: Evaluating Small Business Resources and Programs: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 111th Cong. (2009)

The Minority Business Development Agency: Enhancing the Prospects for Success: Hearing Before the H. Subcomm. on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection of the H. Comm. on Energy and Commerce, 111th Cong. (2009)

2008

Full Committee Hearing on SBA's Progress in Implementing the Women's Procurement