

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2026

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

CC: Secretary Sean Duffy, Department of Transportation

Secretary Howard Lutnick, Department of Commerce

Administratory Kelly Loeffler, Small Business Administration

Dear Mr. President,

For decades, the federal government has recognized a simple truth: equal opportunity cannot exist where equal access has never been granted. From the Small Business Act of 1953 to the establishment of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program in 1983, this nation made a sustained commitment to ensuring that minority-owned small businesses could compete, contribute, and thrive in the American economy. That commitment was not charity, rather, these investments in economic opportunity sprang from an acknowledgment that centuries of exclusion will not self-correct without deliberate policy changes.

Today, more than 1.3 million minority-owned small businesses stand as testament to the hard work of entrepreneurial Americans, and the promise of what that commitment made possible.¹ Despite this success your administration is dismantling the programs which supported this economic development. Through a coordinated series of executive actions, regulatory reversals, and budget eliminations, you are systematically stripping away the programs that made minority entrepreneurship in America possible. We write today to call on you to rescind and reverse these harmful actions.

For sixty years, federal contracting law has operated on a foundational principle: that the government has not only the authority, but the obligation, to remedy the effects of historic discrimination in the marketplace. On March 26, 2026, you discarded that principle. Your Executive Order entitled “Addressing DEI Discrimination by Federal Contractors” does not protect against discrimination but reinstitutionalizes it.² The order prohibits federal contractors from conducting targeted outreach to vendors of color, establishing mentoring or leadership development programs for underrepresented entrepreneurs, or directing any resources toward inclusion. Contractors who fail to comply face cancellation, suspension, and permanent debarment. What is being called a civil rights measure is, in practice, a mechanism to push qualified people of color back out of contracting opportunities they have been historically denied. That is not reform but regression.

Likewise the Department of Transportation’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program was not an accident of policy but a deliberate answer to a documented problem. For more than forty years, the DBE and Airport Concessions DBE program served as the primary pathway for minority and women owned firms to access airport contracting opportunities that had been closed to them. In October 2025, your administration issued an

¹Bureau, US Census. 2024. “Census Bureau Releases New Data on Minority-Owned, Veteran-Owned and Women-Owned Businesses.” [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-release/2024/employer-business.html). December 19, 2024. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-release/2024/employer-business.html>.

² Executive Order 14398 of March 26, 2026, “Addressing DEI Discrimination By Federal Contractors.” Code of Federal Regulations: 16147-16149. <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2026-06286>

Interim Final Rule gutting the programs.³ Every firm, whether newly applying or currently certified, must now prove disadvantage on a strictly individual basis, with no consideration of race or gender and no technical assistance to navigate the process. The burden is enormous and the support is nonexistent. In Georgia alone, only a fraction of DBE-certified businesses have successfully recertified under the new rules. Forty years of progress has been undone by a rule change that offers no guidance or recognition of why these programs existed in the first place.

Similarly, the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program did not emerge from good intentions alone but from evidence. Decades of documented exclusion from federal contracting had made clear that without deliberate intervention, minority entrepreneurs would remain locked out of the marketplace regardless of their qualification. For over fifty years, this program worked. Your administration has made clear its intent to dismantle the 8(a) program entirely, pushing further than any court has required. It has argued the program discriminates against white Americans, but that legal theory has not held up as a basis for action. A court struck down the program's automatic presumption of social disadvantage based on race. Your administration's response has not been to fix that feature. It has been to use the ruling as cover for eliminating the program wholesale.⁴

Separately, under the pretense of fraud and abuse associated with DEI favoritism, approximately 4,300 firms were required to submit years of financial records under a sweeping data call.⁵ Over 1,000 were suspended for missing the compliance deadline.⁶ More than 600 are now being terminated.⁷ In 2025, only 65 businesses were admitted to the program - down from more than 700 the year prior.⁸ I have even heard from an 8(a)-certified woman-owned business owner in my district who watched her annual revenue fall from over \$1 million to \$297,000 after her federal contracts were terminated for convenience. She is not an outlier but an example of what this policy looks like in practice.

Your administration has also moved to eliminate the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), the only federal agency created specifically to support the growth of minority-owned businesses. In March 2025, you signed an Executive Order targeting MBDA for elimination and placed its staff on leave.⁹ By October 2025, reduction-in-force notices had been issued to all remaining employees¹⁰. Though a federal court blocked the shutdown in November 2025, sweeping workforce shifts have hampered its capacity to carry out its mission. Then

³ Department of Transportation. 2025. Review of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise in Airport Concessions Program Implementation Modifications. Edited by Office of the Secretary of Transportation. October 3, 2025. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/10/03/2025-19460/disadvantaged-business-enterprise-program-and-disadvantaged-business-enterprise-in-airport>.

⁴ "SBA Issues Clarifying Guidance That Race-Based Discrimination Is Not Tolerated in the 8(A) Program | U.S. Small Business Administration." 2026. [Sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/01/22/sba-issues-clarifying-guidance-race-based-discrimination-not-tolerated-8a-program). January 22, 2026. <https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/01/22/sba-issues-clarifying-guidance-race-based-discrimination-not-tolerated-8a-program>.

⁵ "SBA Orders All 8(A) Participants to Provide Financial Records | U.S. Small Business Administration." 2025. [Sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/article/2025/12/05/sba-orders-all-8a-participants-provide-financial-records). December 5, 2025. <https://www.sba.gov/article/2025/12/05/sba-orders-all-8a-participants-provide-financial-records>.

⁶ "SBA Suspends over 1,000 8(A) Firms from Program Following December Document Request | U.S. Small Business Administration." 2026. [Sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/01/28/sba-suspends-over-1000-8a-firms-program-following-december-document-request). January 28, 2026. <https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/01/28/sba-suspends-over-1000-8a-firms-program-following-december-document-request>.

⁷ "SBA Moves to Terminate over 620 Firms in 8(A) Federal Contracting PProgram That Refused to Turn over Financial Data | U.S. Small Business Administration." 2026. [Sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/03/04/sba-moves-terminate-over-620-firms-8a-federal-contracting-program-refused-turn-over-financial-data). March 4, 2026. <https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/03/04/sba-moves-terminate-over-620-firms-8a-federal-contracting-program-refused-turn-over-financial-data>.

⁸ "SBA Moves to Terminate over 150 8(A) Firms in Washington, D.C. Following Eligibility Review | U.S. Small Business Administration." 2026. [Sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/02/11/sba-moves-terminate-over-150-8a-firms-washington-dc-following-eligibility-review). February 11, 2026. <https://www.sba.gov/article/2026/02/11/sba-moves-terminate-over-150-8a-firms-washington-dc-following-eligibility-review>.

⁹ Executive Order 14238 of March 20, 2025, Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy, Code of Federal Regulation 13043-13044, <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-04868>

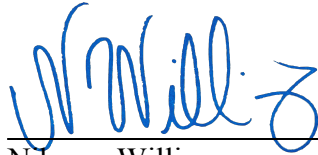
¹⁰ Letter from Jeremy Pelter, Acting Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of Commerce, to Department of Commerce Employee, (Oct. 10, 2025); <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.rid.59257/gov.uscourts.rid.59257.88.1.pdf>

you released your FY2027 budget which calls the agency “divisive.” Labeling MBDA’s mission discriminatory and attacking its capital access programs does not reflect a good-faith legal concern.¹¹ These actions reflect a deliberate choice to abandon minority entrepreneurs and to use the language of civil rights to do it.

Let us be clear about what is happening here. Your administration is not protecting civil rights; rather it's weaponizing the language of civil rights to dismantle the very infrastructure built to make them real. We are not fooled and we reject that framing entirely. We call on you to rescind the March 26, 2026 Executive Order, to direct Secretary Sean Duffy to restore the DOT’s DBE and ACDBE programs with race-conscious eligibility intact, direct Administrator Kelly Loeffler to reinstate the SBA 8(a) program’s original mission, and fully restore the Minority Business Development Agency.

Entrepreneurs of color built their businesses despite every barrier this country placed in front of them, and they will continue to thrive, despite these discriminatory policies.

Sincerely,



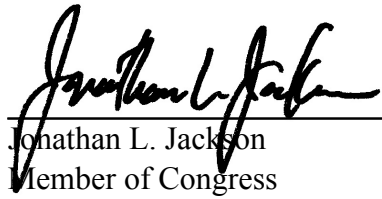
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



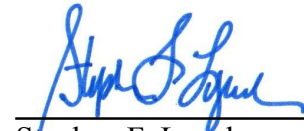
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



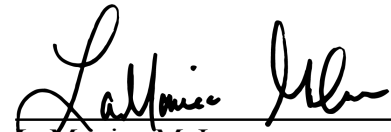
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress

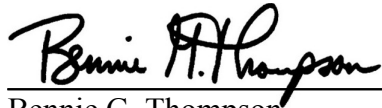
¹¹ President’s Budget: Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2027. April 2, 2026. Office of Management and Budget.
https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/budget_fy2027.pdf



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



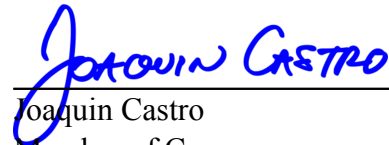
Al Green
Member of Congress



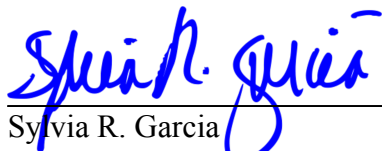
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



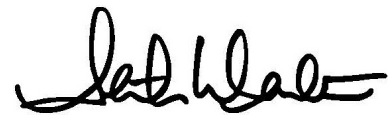
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



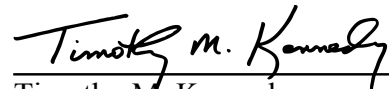
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



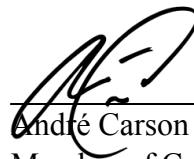
Ayanna Pressley
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Joyce Beatty
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Ed Case

Ed Case
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress