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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To support the establishment of small business development centers internationally and promote international commerce, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CASTRO of Texas introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To support the establishment of small business development centers internationally and promote international commerce, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Global Small Business
5 Network Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Small businesses empower citizens of a
2 country, strengthen communities, provide employ-
3 ment to millions, and form the backbone of the
4 United States economy.

5 (2) Small business concerns across the United
6 States have benefitted from access to technical as-
7 sistance, regulatory guidance, and educational pro-
8 grams through small business development centers
9 (referred to in this Act as “SBDC”) in the United
10 States.

11 (3) The SBDC model has successfully been
12 adopted in Central America, South America, and the
13 Caribbean, through assistance from the Small Busi-
14 ness Network of the Americas’ initiative funded
15 through the Department of State.

16 (4) The Small Business Network of the Amer-
17 icas’ initiative is a highly effective program that
18 works with host governments in the Americas to es-
19 tablish small business development centers, primarily
20 funded by the host governments.

21 (5) SBDC networks outside the United States
22 serve as important conduits of commerce with the
23 United States, providing important information,
24 tools, and regulatory guidance to small businesses
25 interested in trading with the United States.

1 (6) The establishment of SBDCs in other parts
2 of the world promotes opportunities for small busi-
3 nesses to thrive and engage with the United States
4 economy.

5 **SEC. 3. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS.**

6 (a) GLOBAL SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—

7 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State,
8 in consultation with the Administrator of the United
9 States Agency for International Development and
10 the Administrator of the Small Business Administra-
11 tion, is authorized to establish and administer a
12 Global Small Business Network program.

13 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global
14 Small Business Network program is to—

15 (A) enhance the ability of small business
16 concerns in the United States that are affiliated
17 with a small business development center to ex-
18 port to foreign markets and take part in inter-
19 national commerce; and

20 (B) facilitate partners for U.S. businesses
21 and resilient business environments in foreign
22 countries through the development of small
23 business development centers in foreign coun-
24 tries.

1 (3) AFFILIATION.—The Secretary shall deter-
2 mine if a small business development center in a for-
3 foreign country may affiliate with and participate in
4 the Global Small Business Network program.

5 (4) COORDINATION.—The Secretary may co-
6 ordinate with a national or local government of a
7 foreign country that agrees to assist with developing
8 small business development centers in such country
9 pursuant to a grant awarded under subsection (c).

10 (5) DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS.—The Secretary
11 shall leverage existing programs administered by the
12 Department of State, United States Agency for
13 International Development, and other U.S. govern-
14 ment agencies for the purposes of the Global Small
15 Business Network program.

16 (b) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—

17 (1) SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK OF THE AMER-
18 ICAS.—The Secretary may establish a Small Busi-
19 ness Network of the Americas for purposes of allow-
20 ing national and local governments of a foreign
21 country located in Western Hemisphere to partici-
22 pate in the Global Small Business Network program.

23 (2) ASEAN SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—The
24 Secretary may establish an ASEAN Small Business
25 Network for purposes of allowing national and local

1 governments of a foreign country that is a member
2 state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
3 to participate in the Global Small Business Network
4 program.

5 (c) GRANTS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make
7 grants to any qualified entity that submits an appli-
8 cation in such form, and satisfying such require-
9 ments, as the Secretary may require.

10 (2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—A qualified entity may
11 receive a grant for one or both of the following pur-
12 poses:

13 (A) To assist national and local govern-
14 ments of a foreign country to develop a small
15 business development center, or multiple cen-
16 ters, in such country, regardless whether such
17 country participates in a regional network de-
18 scribed in subsection (b).

19 (B) To promote economic connectivity be-
20 tween small business concerns in the United
21 States and economies covered by the Global
22 Small Business Network, including through an
23 internet platform to—

1 (i) enhance the ability of small busi-
2 ness concerns in the United States to take
3 part in international commerce; and

4 (ii) facilitate the growth of small busi-
5 nesses in foreign countries through the de-
6 velopment of small business development
7 centers in foreign countries.

8 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
9 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$2,000,000
10 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024, in addition
11 to amounts otherwise available for economic activities and
12 foreign assistance, to carry out this section. With respect
13 to each such fiscal year, the Secretary is authorized to
14 use—

15 (1) up to \$1,000,000 of such amount to estab-
16 lish and operate the Small Business Network of the
17 Americas; and

18 (2) up to \$1,000,000 of such amount to estab-
19 lish and operate the ASEAN Small Business Net-
20 work.

21 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
23 date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter
24 for a period of 5 years after the date of enactment of this
25 Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Ad-

1 administrator of the United States Agency for International
2 Development and the Administrator of the Small Business
3 Administration, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign
4 Affairs of the House of Representatives, the Committee
5 on Foreign Relations of the Senate, the Committee on
6 Small Business of the House of Representatives, and the
7 Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of
8 the Senate a report on the status of the Global Small
9 Business Network program.

10 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
11 (a) shall include the following:

12 (1) An assessment of support provided to U.S.
13 small businesses that have utilized programs
14 through the Global Small Business Network, to in-
15 clude information on the number of businesses sup-
16 ported, the geographic location of those businesses,
17 the number of jobs supported, and the amount of
18 economic activity generated.

19 (2) A description of methods and strategies to
20 develop small business development centers in for-
21 eign countries for the 2 years after the date of the
22 report.

23 (3) A list, and the current status, of all oper-
24 ating small business development centers in foreign

1 countries that are affiliated with the Global Small
2 Business Network program.

3 (4) A list, and the current status, of all new
4 small business development centers in foreign coun-
5 tries set up through the Global Small Business Net-
6 work program in the 2 years before the date of the
7 report, even if no longer affiliated with the Global
8 Small Business Network program.

9 (5) A description of the estimated timelines for
10 national and local governments of a foreign country
11 participating in the Small Business Network of the
12 Americas and the ASEAN Small Business Network
13 to—

14 (A) complete the creation of a small busi-
15 ness development center in such country; and

16 (B) establish connections between such a
17 small business development center with small
18 business development centers in the United
19 States.

20 (6) A description of international commercial
21 activity resulting from participation in the Global
22 Small Business Network program.

23 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) QUALIFIED ENTITY.—The term “qualified
2 entity” means an entity that is—

3 (A) an institution of higher education (as
4 defined in section 102 of the Higher Education
5 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), except that
6 such term does not include institutions de-
7 scribed in section 102(a)(1)(c) of such Act;

8 (B) a consortium of 2 or more institutions
9 of higher education described in subparagraph
10 (A); or

11 (C) a nonprofit entity with experience in
12 operating or working with small business devel-
13 opment centers in the United States.

14 (2) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term
15 “small business concern” has the meaning given the
16 term under section 3(a) of the Small Business Act
17 (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

18 (3) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CEN-
19 TER.—The term “small business development cen-
20 ter”—

21 (A) with respect to a center located in the
22 United States—

23 (i) has the meaning given such term
24 in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15
25 U.S.C. 632); and

1 (ii) includes a women’s business cen-
2 ter, as such term is used under section 29
3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
4 656); and

5 (B) with respect to a center located in a
6 foreign country, means an entity that—

7 (i) provides small business-oriented
8 employment or natural resources develop-
9 ment programs;

10 (ii) promotes studies, research, and
11 counseling concerning the managing, fi-
12 nancing, and operation of small businesses;

13 (iii) provides management and tech-
14 nical assistance regarding small business
15 participation in international markets and
16 international commerce, including with the
17 United States;

18 (iv) provides delivery or distribution of
19 services and information described in this
20 subparagraph; or

21 (v) provides access to business ana-
22 lysts who can refer a small business to
23 available experts.