**Take Action - Recess Alert**

**October 2019**

**Why *You* Need to Be an Advocate**

CAMEO works to grow a healthy, vibrant, thriving environment for all entrepreneurs and start-up businesses every day. On Capitol Hill and in the Administration, CAMEO is active in promoting our vision of economic opportunity for all entrepreneurs. But any successful advocacy effort also includes direct communications between our statewide member network and their elected officials. That is where *you* come in.

While CAMEO’s government relations team will continue to advocate for the nearly 220 organizations, agencies, and individuals dedicated to furthering Micro-Business development, your engagement with lawmakers in your home districts can make all the difference.

**What to Talk About: Save the PRIME Program and Funding for Women’s Business Centers**

CAMEO has been active on Capitol Hill, advocating for robust funding of critical entrepreneurial development programs. Two of those programs are facing cuts in funding in the Senate Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) bill.

* **Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME).** The House of Representatives passed appropriations legislation funding the PRIME program for FY2020 at $7 million; however, the Senate version of the bill does **not** include funding for PRIME.
* **Women’s Business Centers (WBCs).** The House of Representatives funds WBCs at $30 million; however, the Senate version of the bill only funds WBCs at $18.5 million.

The PRIME program provides assistance to organizations that help low-income entrepreneurs who lack sufficient training and education to gain access to capital to establish and expand their small businesses. CAMEO recently received the largest grant it has ever obtained through the PRIME program, which will allow us to build the capacity of business advising organizations and microlenders to use online tools more efficiently. This program is crucial to the needs of micro-entrepreneurs.

WBCs are a national network of more than 100 centers that offer one-on-one counseling, training, networking, workshops, technical assistance and mentoring to women entrepreneurs on numerous business development topics, including business startup, financial management, marketing and procurement.

**CAMEO is asking its members to reach out to Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris,  and  urge them to support funding for these critical programs at the same level as the House bill - $7 million for PRIME and $30 million for WBCs.**

**How to Reach Your Legislator: Meet, Call, Write**

**If You Are Meeting**: You can find contact information for Senator Feinstein’s office in your district [here](https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/state-offices). You can find contact information for Senator Harris’ office in your district [here](https://www.harris.senate.gov/contact/offices). Call the office to schedule a meeting.

**If You Are Calling**: You can reach Senator Diane Feinstein’s D.C. office at (202) 224-3841 and Senator Kamala Harris’ office at (202) 224-3553.

Use this Suggested Script:

“Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a constituent living in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am calling to urge Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to support robust funding for the SBA’a Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME) and Women’s Business Centers in the FY2020 Appropriations bill. Funding for these crucial programs supports job creation in our state and will continue to spur economic opportunity in areas that need it most. I urge Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to support funding of the SBA Prime Program at $7 million and Women’s Business Centers at $30 million.”

**If You Are Writing:** You can send Senator Feinstein an email message [here](https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-me). You can send Senator Harris an email message [here](https://www.harris.senate.gov/contact/email).

Use this Suggested Language:

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a constituent living in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am writing to urge you to support robust funding for both the SBA’a Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME), as well as Women’s Business Centers (WBCs) in the FY2020 Appropriations bill.

Investment in microbusiness development matters: 88 percent of small businesses that receive business development services are still in business after five years. This compares to an overall five year business success rate of less than 50 percent. Businesses that receive training also tend to have average annual revenues that are 38 percent higher than those that do not.

Funding for these crucial programs supports job creation in our state and will continue to spur economic opportunity in areas that need it most. I ask you to support funding of the SBA Prime Program at $7 million and Women’s Business Centers at $30 million. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Making the Meeting Valuable**

The goal of Congressional outreach during recess is to amplify the message CAMEO builds in Washington. Start by introducing yourself, your business, and CAMEO.

Good meeting tips:

* *Keep It Simple:* Members will likely not know the ins and outs of our policy requests. Likewise, you are not expected to be a policy expert.
* *Keep It Concise:* These meetings tend to be short. Know what you want to say and focus on the “ask.”
* *Follow Up:* Follow up matters.  After the meeting, be sure to send the appropriate thank you email to the legislator and any staff members in attendance. If you discussed any items that need to be passed along, please do so in a timely fashion. If the legislator asked you any questions and you need additional information, please send your requests to Heidi Pickman at hpickman@microbiz.org.