

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4587

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 23, 2016

Mr. GIBSON (for himself, Mr. HANNA, and Mr. MOULTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business

A BILL

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, 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 “Small Business
5 Broadband and Emerging Information Technology En-
6 hancement Act of 2015”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) According to a report by the Federal Com-
2 munications Commission entitled “Connecting Amer-
3 ica: The National Broadband Plan”, dated March
4 2010, the Commission recommends that—

5 (A) “To fully implement next-generation
6 technology within its operations, the SBA
7 should also appoint a broadband and emerging
8 IT coordinator. This individual would ensure
9 that SBA programs maintain the requisite
10 broadband expertise, tools and training courses
11 to serve small businesses.”;

12 (B) “Congress should consider ways to le-
13 verage existing assistance provided through”
14 entrepreneurial development programs, “to
15 focus training on advanced IT and broadband
16 applications”;

17 (C) “Congress could also consider ways to
18 support technology training among women en-
19 trepreneurs through” women’s business centers;

20 (D) “The training programs should include
21 an entry-level ‘Broadband 101’ course to give
22 small businesses an introduction to how to cap-
23 italize on broadband connectivity, as well as
24 more advanced applications for IT staff.”; and

1 (E) small- and medium-enterprise “IT
2 training should include resources for non-IT
3 staff, such as how to use e-commerce tools for
4 sales, streamline finance with online records or
5 leverage knowledge management across an or-
6 ganization.”.

7 (2) According to a report by the Broadband
8 Opportunity Council, dated August 20, 2015, the
9 availability of and access to broadband technology
10 enables—

11 (A) greater civic participation, by providing
12 tools for open government and streamlining
13 government process;

14 (B) changes in how people access edu-
15 cational resources, collaborate in the edu-
16 cational process, conduct research, and continue
17 to learn anytime, anyplace, and at any pace;

18 (C) improved healthcare access, treat-
19 ments, and information;

20 (D) new business models that create busi-
21 ness efficiencies, drive job creation, and connect
22 manufacturers and store-fronts to clients and
23 partners worldwide; and

24 (E) bringing communities together and im-
25 provements to public safety, creating a greener

1 planet, and make transportation systems more
2 resilient and efficient.

3 (3) According to a report entitled “The State of
4 the App Economy”, dated October 2014—

5 (A) “More than three-quarters of the high-
6 est grossing apps are produced by startups and
7 small companies.”; and

8 (B) “Seventy-eight percent of the leading
9 app companies are located outside Silicon Val-
10 ley.”.

11 (4) According to a report entitled, “Developer
12 Economics Q1 2015: State of the Developer Na-
13 tion”, dated February 2015, “The emergence of the
14 app industry over the past eight years has grown to
15 a \$120 billion economy.”.

16 **SEC. 3. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECH-**
17 **NOLOGY COORDINATOR.**

18 The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is
19 amended—

20 (1) by redesignating section 47 as section 48;
21 and

22 (2) by inserting after section 46 the following:

23 **“SEC. 47. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION**
24 **TECHNOLOGY.**

25 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

1 “(1) the term ‘Associate Administrator’ means
2 the Associate Administrator for the Office of Invest-
3 ment and Innovation; and

4 “(2) the term ‘broadband and emerging infor-
5 mation technology coordinator’ means the employee
6 designated to carry out the broadband and emerging
7 information technology coordination responsibilities
8 of the Administration under subsection (b)(1).

9 “(b) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—

10 “(1) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—The As-
11 sociate Administrator shall designate a senior em-
12 ployee of the Office of Investment and Innovation to
13 serve as the broadband and emerging information
14 technology coordinator, who—

15 “(A) shall report to the Associate Adminis-
16 trator;

17 “(B) shall work in coordination with—

18 “(i) the chief information officer, the
19 chief technology officer, and the head of
20 the Office of Technology of the Adminis-
21 tration; and

22 “(ii) any other Associate Adminis-
23 trator of the Administration determined
24 appropriate by the Associate Adminis-
25 trator;

1 “(C) has experience developing and imple-
2 menting telecommunications policy in the pri-
3 vate sector or government; and

4 “(D) has demonstrated significant experi-
5 ence in the area of broadband or emerging in-
6 formation technology.

7 “(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COORDINATOR.—
8 The broadband and emerging information technology
9 coordinator shall—

10 “(A) coordinate programs of the Adminis-
11 tration that assist small business concerns in
12 adopting, making innovations in, and using
13 broadband and other emerging information
14 technologies;

15 “(B) serve as the primary liaison of the
16 Administration to other Federal agencies in-
17 volved in broadband and emerging information
18 technology policy, including the Department of
19 Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and
20 the Federal Communications Commission;

21 “(C) identify best practices relating to
22 broadband and emerging information tech-
23 nology that may benefit small business con-
24 cerns; and

1 “(D) identify and catalog tools and train-
2 ing available through the resource partners of
3 the Administration that assist small business
4 concerns in adopting, making innovations in,
5 and using broadband and emerging tech-
6 nologies.

7 “(3) TRAVEL.—Not more than 20 percent of
8 the hours of service by the broadband and emerging
9 information technology coordinator during any fiscal
10 year shall consist of travel outside the United States
11 to perform official duties.

12 “(c) BROADBAND AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY
13 TRAINING.—

14 “(1) TRAINING.—The Associate Administrator
15 shall provide to employees of the Administration
16 training that—

17 “(A) familiarizes employees of the Admin-
18 istration with broadband and other emerging
19 information technologies;

20 “(B) includes—

21 “(i) instruction on counseling small
22 business concerns regarding adopting,
23 making innovations in, and using broad-
24 band and other emerging information tech-
25 nologies; and

1 “(ii) information on programs of the
2 Federal Government that provide assist-
3 ance to small business concerns relating to
4 broadband and emerging information tech-
5 nologies; and

6 “(C) to the maximum extent practicable,
7 uses the tools and training cataloged and iden-
8 tified under subsection (b)(2)(D).

9 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
11 as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

12 “(d) REPORTS.—

13 “(1) BIENNIAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES.—Not
14 later than 2 years after the date on which the Asso-
15 ciate Administrator makes the first designation of
16 an employee under subsection (b), and every 2 years
17 thereafter, the broadband and emerging information
18 technology coordinator shall submit to the Com-
19 mittee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of
20 the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of
21 the House of Representatives a report regarding the
22 programs and activities of the Administration relat-
23 ing to broadband and other emerging information
24 technologies.

1 “(2) IMPACT OF BROADBAND SPEED AND PRICE
2 ON SMALL BUSINESSES.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to appropria-
4 tions, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall con-
5 duct a study evaluating the impact of broad-
6 band speed and price on small business con-
7 cerns.

8 “(B) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years
9 after the date of enactment of the Small Busi-
10 ness Broadband and Emerging Information
11 Technology Enhancement Act of 2015, the
12 Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall submit to the
13 Committee on Commerce, Science, and Trans-
14 portation and the Committee on Small Business
15 and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the
16 Committee on Energy and Commerce and the
17 Committee on Small Business of the House of
18 Representatives a report on the results of the
19 study under subparagraph (A), including—

20 “(i) a survey of broadband speeds
21 available to small business concerns;

22 “(ii) a survey of the cost of broadband
23 speeds available to small business con-
24 cerns;

1 “(iii) a survey of the type of broad-
2 band technology used by small business
3 concerns; and

4 “(iv) any policy recommendations that
5 may improve the access of small business
6 concerns to comparable broadband services
7 at comparable rates in all regions of the
8 United States.”.

9 **SEC. 4. ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

10 Section 21(c)(3)(B) of the Small Business Act (15
11 U.S.C. 648(c)(3)(B)) is amended—

12 (1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by insert-
13 ing “accessing broadband and other emerging infor-
14 mation technology,” after “technology transfer,”;

15 (2) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

16 (3) in clause (iii), by adding “and” at the end;

17 and

18 (4) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(iv) increasing the competitiveness and
20 productivity of small business concerns by as-
21 sisting entrepreneurs in accessing broadband
22 and other emerging information technology;”.

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