

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8628

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 20, 2020

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mrs. WAGNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## 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:

8 (1) Small businesses empower citizens of a  
9 country, strengthen communities, provide employ-

1 ment to millions, and form the backbone of the  
2 United States economy.

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

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

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

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

24 (6) The establishment of SBDCs in other parts  
25 of the world promotes opportunities for small busi-

1 nesses to thrive and engage with the United States  
2 economy.

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

4 (a) GLOBAL SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—

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

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

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

18 (B) facilitate partners for small business  
19 concerns in the United States and resilient  
20 business environments in foreign countries  
21 through the development of small business de-  
22 velopment centers in foreign countries.

23 (3) AFFILIATION.—The Secretary of State shall  
24 determine if a small business development center in

1 a foreign country may affiliate with and participate  
2 in the Global Small Business Network program.

3 (4) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of State  
4 may coordinate with a national or local government  
5 of a foreign country that agrees to assist with devel-  
6 oping small business development centers in such  
7 country pursuant to a grant awarded under sub-  
8 section (c).

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

15 (b) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—

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

22 (2) ASEAN SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK.—The  
23 Secretary of State may establish an ASEAN Small  
24 Business Network for purposes of allowing national  
25 and local governments of a foreign country that is

1 a member state of the Association of Southeast  
2 Asian Nations to participate in the Global Small  
3 Business Network program.

4 (c) GRANTS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may  
6 make grants to any qualified entity that submits an  
7 application in such form, and satisfying such re-  
8 quirements, as the Secretary may require.

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

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

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

23 (i) enhance the ability of small busi-  
24 ness concerns in the United States to take  
25 part in international commerce; and

1                   (ii) facilitate the growth of small busi-  
2                   nesses in foreign countries through the de-  
3                   velopment of small business development  
4                   centers in foreign countries.

5           (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
6 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State  
7 \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026,  
8 in addition to amounts otherwise available for economic  
9 activities and foreign assistance, to carry out this section.  
10 With respect to each such fiscal year, the Secretary is au-  
11 thorized to use—

12                   (1) up to \$1,000,000 of such amount to estab-  
13                   lish and operate the Small Business Network of the  
14                   Americas; and

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

18           (e) REPORT.—

19                   (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year  
20                   after the date of enactment of this Act and every  
21                   two years thereafter for a period of four years, the  
22                   Secretary of State, in consultation with the Adminis-  
23                   trator of the United States Agency for International  
24                   Development and the Administrator of the Small  
25                   Business Administration, shall submit to the Com-

1       committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-  
2       representatives, the Committee on Foreign Relations of  
3       the Senate, the Committee on Small Business of the  
4       House of Representatives, and the Committee on  
5       Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate  
6       a report on the status of the Global Small Business  
7       Network program.

8               (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by para-  
9       graph (1) shall include the following:

10               (A) An assessment of support provided to  
11               small business concerns in the United States  
12               that have utilized programs through the Global  
13               Small Business Network, including information  
14               on the number of businesses supported, the geo-  
15               graphic location of such businesses, the number  
16               of jobs supported, and the amount of economic  
17               activity generated.

18               (B) A description of methods and strate-  
19               gies to develop small business development cen-  
20               ters in foreign countries for the two years after  
21               the date of such report.

22               (C) A list, and the current status, of all  
23               operating small business development centers in  
24               foreign countries that are affiliated with the  
25               Global Small Business Network program.

1 (D) A list, and the current status, of all  
2 new small business development centers in for-  
3 eign countries set up through the Global Small  
4 Business Network program in the two years be-  
5 fore the date of the report, even if no longer af-  
6 filiated with the Global Small Business Network  
7 program.

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

13 (i) complete the creation of a small  
14 business development center in such coun-  
15 try; and

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

20 (F) A description of international commer-  
21 cial activity resulting from participation in the  
22 Global Small Business Network program.

23 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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



1 (A) an institution of higher education (as  
2 such term is defined in section 102 of the High-  
3 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)),  
4 except that such term does not include institu-  
5 tions described in section 102(a)(1)(c) of such  
6 Act;

7 (B) a consortium of two or more institu-  
8 tions of higher education described in subpara-  
9 graph (A); or

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

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

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

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

22 (i) has the meaning given such term  
23 in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15  
24 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.

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