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A WIN IN THE HOUSE FOR WOMEN SEEKING ACCESS TO FEDERAL CONTRACTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 22, 2014) – [Women Impacting Public Policy](#) (WIPP) applauds action by the House of Representatives to improve the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract Program, helping women entrepreneurs access the federal market. Earlier today, the House of Representatives voted 325 to 98 to pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2015 (H.R. 4435), which included a provision authorizing sole-source contracts in the WOSB procurement program. The amendment was added to the annual defense spending bill by Representative Speier who has championed improvements to the program and broader initiatives supporting women entrepreneurs.

The WOSB procurement program, officially launched in 2011, is a critical gateway into the world of government contracting for women entrepreneurs nationwide. Since its inception, the WOSB procurement program has been hampered by restrictions on the size and type of contracts awarded. All other major small business contracting programs have sole-source authority, however the WOSB procurement program does not have it. This amendment fixes that inequity.

Representative Speier's amendment also expedites a disparity study by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), which identifies under-represented industries for participation in the WOSB procurement program. Supporters have noted that the study is critical to expanding the program to more industries where the program is needed. The study was originally required by 2018—more than eleven years after the last study—but would be accelerated to 2015.

“We are very grateful to Rep. Speier for her leadership and for improving access to the federal sector for the nearly 8 million women business owners nationwide. The WOSB program is critical to the growth and success of many WIPP members and to women business owners across the country. I am optimistic that these changes will help the government reach and exceed, for the first time, its 5% contracting goal,” commented Barbara Kasoff, president of Women Impacting Public Policy.

This victory was made possible with support from a broad coalition of women's business and small business organizations that supported the amendment. The next step is passage in the Senate. Supporters of the WOSB procurement program in the Senate are actively working to include similar language in the Senate version of the FY15 NDAA, S. 2289.

About WIPP:

WIPP is a national nonpartisan public policy organization advocating on behalf of its coalition of 4.7 million businesswomen including 75 business organizations. WIPP identifies important trends and opportunities and provides a collaborative model for the public and private sectors to increase the economic power of women-owned businesses. For more information, please visit www.wipp.org.

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