



Recess Guide August 2018

Dear WIPP Members:

Congress has adjourned for a month-long August recess. Although the Senate is planning a short one-week recess, the House is adjourned for the month. Your legislators will be back home in their districts and states to meet with constituents, like you, to share updates on their efforts in Washington, D.C. They are eager to learn about how these efforts are impacting you. Take advantage of this opportunity to continue WIPP's advocacy work by engaging with your Members of Congress.

As women entrepreneurs, you are affected by government policy every day – from limits on capital access, to entering the federal market or simply paying your taxes. WIPP aggregates those concerns and issues to drive our policy priorities.

While WIPP's government relations team will continue to advocate for the nearly ten million women business owners nationwide, your engagement with lawmakers in your home districts and states can make all the difference. We have highlighted below WIPP's policy priorities to use as a guide for your meetings. We encourage you to share with your lawmaker how a policy issue, specific legislation or government program is impacting you and your business.

Any successful advocacy effort must include direct communications between constituents and their elected officials. Your engagement with lawmakers in your home districts can make all the difference to our success!

Sincerely,

Candace Waterman
President, Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP)



How to Reach Your Elected Officials

The best way to make sure WIPP's message is heard is to schedule a meeting with your legislators through their local offices. You can find your Senators [here](#). You can find your Representative [here](#).

- Schedule a meeting with your legislators and/or their staff. Call your district office and be flexible with respect to scheduling. It doesn't need to be a formal meeting, you can arrange to meet your elected officials after a townhall or another public meeting. You may have to make more than one call to arrange this meeting.
- An alternative to one-on-one meetings is attending town hall meetings. These are open to the public and can generally be found on the Member's website or by contacting the office. If you attend one of these events, you can request an introduction to the Member.
- Finally, social media, including Twitter and Facebook, are brief, but well-used avenues for communicating with legislators. Committees also have social media accounts where comments can be directed.

Key Topics to Discuss with Your Legislators

Below are the WIPP's policy priorities to use as a guide for your meetings. **Personal stories are always compelling to legislators, so make sure to share yours.** Highlight how a policy issue, specific legislation or government program is impacting you and your business. Below are some issues that you can discuss:

1. Create parity for women-owned businesses in federal contracting and ensure they have adequate contracting opportunities through the WOSB procurement program. Give small businesses that are on the cusp of becoming midsize businesses more runway to make the transition successful. WIPP supports the recently passed H.R. 6330, "Small Business Runway Extension Act of 2018," which would require SBA to have a 5-year lookback instead of the current 3-year lookback for the purposes of determining size.
2. Expand sole source contracts to WOSBs. WIPP supports H.R. 6369, "Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act of 2018." This recently passed bill increases the size of sole source contract awards for women owned, service-disabled veteran-owned and HUBZone small businesses from a total award of \$4 million and \$7 million (manufacturing and construction) to an annual amount over the life of the contract.
3. Much needed infrastructure improvements are essential to the nation's competitiveness. This includes not only utilization of physical infrastructure but technological advances in both rural and urban areas.
4. Fairness in the workforce should be addressed. In addition, addressing the skills gap through workforce development programs is important to the future workforce.
5. Implementation of the tax cuts, and ensuring small business structured as pass-through entities receive parity with large corporations.
6. Increasing available capital to women-owned firms is a key to growth and business success.



Make the Most of Your Meeting

The goal of Congressional outreach during recess is to amplify the message WIPP builds in Washington, D.C. Start by introducing yourself, your organization, and sharing information about WIPP.

Here are some tips to make the most out of your meeting:

1. **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. It is important to share how the issue(s) impacts your organization/business.
2. **Keep It Concise:** These meetings tend to be short. Know what you want to say and focus on the “ask” included with each policy priority.
3. **Have Your Handout:** Leave behind WIPP’s Policy Priorities document (below) with the office. This has additional information on WIPP’s focus for 2018.
4. **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.

Please share with us if you met with a Member of Congress and/or their staff. If the legislator asked you any questions and you need additional information, please feel free to contact Jennifer White at jwhite@madisonservicesgroup.com for assistance.



2018 Policy Priorities

Create Parity for WOSBs in Federal Contracting

In 2015, WIPP pressed for – and achieved – the swift implementation of sole source authority to the WOSB Procurement Program. In 2016, WIPP worked to ensure that federal buyers fully utilize the WOSB program and that women-owned businesses seeking federal contracts take advantage of these opportunities. In 2017, WIPP successfully pushed for legislation to examine whether women and other small businesses are successfully winning “spots” on large, multi-year Multiple Award Contracts (MACs). The bill was included in the National Defense Authorization Act.

- WIPP is now looking toward tackling parity for WOSBs in the General Services Administration’s (GSA) information technology space through a WOSB Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC). GSA uses GWACs to allow other federal agencies to purchase IT in the most efficient and effective manner possible while enabling them to meet their socio-economic goals. According to the GSA, “using GWACs is a faster alternative to time-consuming and costly full and open competitions.” Due to the continued popularity of these contracts and the increasing number of women-owned businesses selling IT to the federal government, GSA should create a WOSB GWAC. This action would present a tremendous opportunity for women-owned firms to contract with the government and provide federal agencies a new contract solution that would provide greater value to the taxpayer.
- Additionally, WIPP is working to create a pathway to success for women-owned firms that out-grow small status and their ability to utilize set-aside programs to continue their prosperity in government contracting. WIPP has partnered with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce on their Pathway to Growth initiative, which gives large small businesses more runway before transitioning out of the small business set aside program and into full and open competition.

Ensure Women-Owned Businesses Have Adequate Infrastructure Contract Opportunities

An infrastructure bill – in whatever form – provides increased opportunities for government contractors. The Trump Administration released its infrastructure principles in February, seeking \$200 billion in federal money, local and state tax dollars and private investment to generate \$1.5 trillion in funding for repairing and improving our nation’s infrastructure. The administration’s recommendations will be broken down into components in Congress and likely added to existing bills.

- When crafting various infrastructure legislation, Congress should allow the transmittal of WOSB and small business goals contained in the Small Business Act to translate to every project.

Increasing Access to Capital for Women

Capital is the lifeline of business. For women, however, accessing capital continues to be difficult. According to Pitchbook, although women received 4.9% of all VC deals, the dollar amount of these deals was just over 2% in 2016.

- Small Business Investment Companies (SBICs) could help mitigate the gender problem. Many women cannot gain the requisite portfolio managing experience to become a fund manager, leading to a cyclical exclusion of women managers – ultimately preventing women from lending to women. Creating an “Emerging Managers” track in the SBIC program and allowing these managers to engage in equity-based financing,

would help develop a generation of female fund managers. These managers, in turn, would increase the VC opportunities for women-owned firms.

- WIPP will continue to advocate for the creation of a federal tax credit for angel investment mirroring state models would increase angel investment at the critical early stage.
- Traditional lenders are not meeting the needs of women entrepreneurs. WIPP will continue to support policies that encourage access to alternative financing options such as online lending and crowdfunding.

Modernizing Our Tax Code

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was signed into law early in the year, which will provide individuals and businesses with tax cuts for the FY2018 tax year. In addition, the bill addressed a tax priority for WIPP – the estate tax - doubling the exemption limits to \$11.18 million for individuals and \$22.36 million for married couples. Congress, for the first time, addressed the taxation of pass-through entities (LLCs, S Corps and Partnerships), a hard-fought victory for WIPP.

- WIPP will monitor implementation of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to ensure women business owners are not faced with onerous compliance requirements.
- We will continue to push for further modernization and simplification of the tax code to ensure deductions and credits are equitable no matter what the structure of the company.

Improving Access & Cost of Health Coverage

Small businesses face higher administrative and premium costs for health insurance. This puts women entrepreneurs at an inherent disadvantage, as health insurance is an important benefit to attract and retain employees.

- WIPP will continue to support pooling mechanisms like Association Health Plans (AHPs) as a pathway to increase access to coverage options and lower cost.
- We will support improvements to tax preferred accounts like Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs), Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), to provide women business owners with mechanisms to help them and their employees cover their health insurance costs.

Fairness in the Workplace

Key to the success of women owned businesses is human capital – a dynamic workforce that meets the needs of an ever-changing business environment. Government and business need to work together to ready a workforce that can meet those challenges.

- Beginning with early childhood education, inclusion of women in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) and gig workers, all require a pivot in public policies. These policy changes include taxation, education, privacy and labor laws. WIPP will urge Congress to appropriate funding and investment in STEM education in schools and also prioritize investment in cybersecurity workforce development and training to address the current shortage of cybersecurity talent.
- Women business owners are in a position of leadership when it comes to workplace equity. It is well documented that on average, women are promoted at a lower rate than men and are still paid 18.2% less than their male colleagues. WIPP believes fairness in the workplace should be the standard, where pay and advancement depends on the quality of work, not gender or the color of one's skin. We will promote public policies that can help correct inequities but the need for education to change societal biases is imperative to the success of the workforce.