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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

June 11, 2003

Sent via facsimile and standard mail

The Honorable Hector V. Barreto
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Barreto:

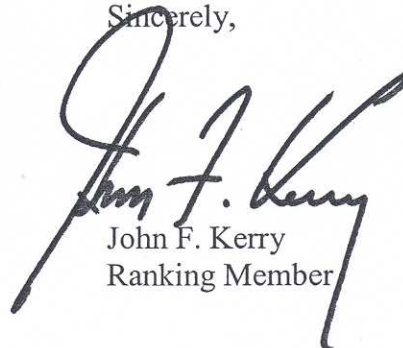
I am writing to express my concern that, because the SBA is incorrectly interpreting the funding formula in the Women's Business Centers program and therefore does not appear to have sufficient funding to completely support all thirty-five Women's Business Centers that have requested sustainability grants, the agency is planning to determine grant amounts based on various criteria gathered by site visits and the centers' annual programmatic reviews. This is unprecedented and goes against congressional intent.

As mentioned in a letter sent by the Committee on June 1, 2003, the Women's Business Centers Sustainability Act was designed to sustain the established and successful infrastructure of existing centers by allowing all graduating Women's Business Centers that meet certain SBA standards to receive continued funding under sustainability grants.

While I believe it is important and in the spirit of the law to allow newly graduating Women's Business Centers to participate in the Sustainability pilot program, it is essential that the SBA first honor the cooperative agreements and contracts it has with centers that are already in the sustainability part of the program and have received sustainability grants.

Therefore, in my capacity as the Ranking Member of the SBA's oversight Committee, it is my strong recommendation that the SBA first uphold those twenty-nine sustainability agreements previously entered and then equally divide the eligible remaining funding among those Women's Business Centers that have applied for initial sustainability grants and meet the standards set by the Small Business Administration.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
John F. Kerry
Ranking Member