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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

March 22, 2002

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
1511 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Johnson:

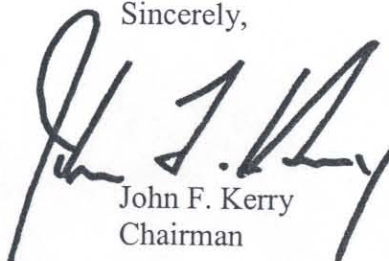
Recently, I wrote to you to ask for your counsel and support in improving Federal minority contracting programs, especially the 8(a) Business Development program, and to work together on a new strategy to assist minority-owned small businesses.

Since that time, and with terrific input from many leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus and the African American business community, I have been working to advance a new and improved agenda that supports minority-owned firms. For example, on March 6, 2002, I introduced S. 1994, the "Combined 8(a) and HUBZone Priority Preference Act," which will make it easier for minority-owned firms to win Federal contracts and increase the monetary value of contracts they receive. In addition, on March 20, 2002, I submitted my formal comments to the Small Business Administration (SBA) opposing key provisions of the Bush Administration's proposed HUBZone rule -- stressing the importance of efforts to help minority contractors and the necessity of protecting the 8(a) program for current and future minority business owners. I will continue to prod the Bush Administration to heed our common agenda on these important issues.

The questions before us now are: Where can we go together from here? and How do we keep the momentum going to advance a small business agenda in the best interests of America's minority-owned and operated businesses? To do this most effectively, I hope you won't mind if I again ask for your advice and any thoughts you might be willing to share about areas in which we can partner together.

My staff will be forwarding copies of my legislation and comment letter to your staff. I look forward to working with you and your fellow Caucus members on these and other important issues to help America's minority-owned small businesses.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
Chairman