

Good morning. I would like to thank Senator Kerry and the members of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship for inviting me to participate in this important roundtable discussion.

Let me welcome all of you to my hometown of Framingham which I proudly serve in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. As you may be aware, Framingham State College has a long history of helping women obtain the skills necessary to lead successful careers and fulfilling lives. Women from every background have realized their dreams in large part through the education opportunities available to them at this fine institution of higher learning. Framingham State College is indeed a fitting place to hold this type of discussion.

Prior to serving in the State Legislature, I worked as a real estate agent here in Framingham. While a majority of my colleagues were women, I quickly noticed that those in leadership positions within the firm were all men. I often wondered why this was the case when there were so many smart, talented women thriving within the organization's sales ranks.

Now that I serve in the State Legislature, I am a member of the minority. Only 25% of my colleagues are women. While we scored a victory recently when Senator Therese Murray became the first woman Senate President, we still have a long way to go.

While I am optimistic that we are in a state of transition, and the way women's roles are perceived has undergone a transformation recently, more changes need to take place in order to level the playing field in business as well as in politics.

Women in Massachusetts are fortunate to have access to the State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance which promotes the development of certified minority business enterprises, women owned business enterprises, and minority non-profit and women non-profit enterprises.

Through this office the Commonwealth spends \$240 million on Women and Minority owned businesses, specifically offering services in certification, enforcement, business assistance and advocacy.

This is just one program that is making a difference for women in Massachusetts and it is the type of initiative which needs to happen if we are to achieve full equality in the workplace

I am looking forward to a thought provoking discussion today on this important topic and working with the Senator, and members of the Committee to make sure we are doing all we can to help women business leaders overcome hurdles and succeed here in Massachusetts. Thank you.