



**Opening Statement of Chairman Sam Graves for Contracting Legislation Markup
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
112th Congress
March 22, 2012**

Good morning. I call this Small Business Committee meeting to order.

The Committee is in the midst of an effort to enact comprehensive reform of government contracting to help small businesses. Our efforts began with 10 hearings on contracting topics. This was followed by the introduction of 8 contracting bills supported by over 20 trade associations. Last week, the Committee successfully marked up 4 of those bills, plus 2 additional bills introduced by the minority. This week, we are going to mark up the remaining 4 bills, plus a bill introduced by the Ranking Member. I believe this is a testament to the importance of government contracting for small businesses, and a tribute to the bipartisan nature of this Committee.

While we will briefly discuss each of the bills individually before we mark it up, I want to emphasize how important these issues are to small businesses and to taxpayers. The federal government regularly spends over half a trillion dollars on federal contracts each year, and has spent over \$100 billion so far this year. When small businesses compete for these contracts, something important happens: Jobs are created. Innovation occurs. Competition brings down prices. In short, when small business wins, we all win.

Today we are examining some of the key issues for small businesses, such as who is small. We are making sure that programs intended to help small businesses deliver results and don't inadvertently harm the very business they are supposed to help. We are halting unjustified contract bundling, which will result in more competition. We are standardizing the assistance we provide to the subcategories of small businesses. And we are protecting the taxpayers against fraud.

All of these issues deserve bipartisan support, and I look forward to working with all of you today to move these bills one step closer to becoming law.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for her opening remarks.