

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Resolution BED-21-24

A RESOLUTION ON EQUITABLE SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES IN ECONOMIC DISTRESS

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary public health response to it have significantly disrupted the economic prospects of many businesses, particularly small businesses, across the United States;

WHEREAS, the U.S. unemployment rate peaked at 14.7 percent in April 2020 as many employers responded to the economic downturn created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and without help from the government, our nation may return to similar or more severe economic downturn;

WHEREAS, the state-legal cannabis industry has, like many industries, faced direct and indirect disruptions to business operations;

WHEREAS, the state-legal cannabis industry has empowered many people of color and others with diverse backgrounds who were disproportionately affected by the criminalization of cannabis to become business owners and employees in this industry;

WHEREAS, the state-legal cannabis industry employed, as of January 2020, approximately 243,000 individuals in 33 states and 4 territories;

WHEREAS, the state-legal cannabis industry generated more than \$1.9 billion in state and local tax revenue in 2019;

WHEREAS, many states have recognized that cannabis businesses are an “essential” industry during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing popular medicinal and other products;

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, among other provisions, included economic support and worker retention programs for small businesses such as the Paycheck Protection Program, Small Business Administration Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans, the Employee Retention Tax Credit, and others; and

WHEREAS, unlike other businesses, state-legal cannabis businesses are not eligible for existing federal economic support and worker retention programs like those authorized by the CARES Act.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) believes that state-legal cannabis businesses should be treated equally and included in any assistance, economic support, and worker retention programs for which they would be eligible but for the fact they are in the cannabis industry;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls on Congress to modify existing economic support and worker retention programs for businesses that it has created, including, but not limited to, those authorized by the CARES Act of 2020 to allow otherwise eligible state-legal cannabis businesses to utilize these programs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls on Congress to include the state-legal cannabis industry in all future assistance, economic support, and worker retention programs for similar businesses that it authorizes; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Senator Steven Bradford (CA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Business and Economic Development Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chairs: Senator James Sanders (NY) and Representative Reginald Bolding (AZ)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2020

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President