

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (BED)

Resolution BED-25-13

ENSURE EQUITY IN STATE CONTRACTING

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of fostering inclusive economic opportunities for all individuals, particularly Black Americans and those with disabilities, who often face systemic barriers in accessing state procurement opportunities;

WHEREAS, the inclusion of businesses owned by individuals with disabilities in state procurement processes aligns with our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and is essential for promoting social and economic justice;

WHEREAS, 8.4 percent of people with disabilities are self-employed in comparison to 5.9% of individuals without a disability according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics;

WHEREAS, an estimated 161,031 businesses supporting more than 1.4 million employees are owned by Black Americans according to the U.S. Census Bureau;

WHEREAS, small businesses are the engine of the American economy, employing just under half of all US workers and comprising more than 99 percent of businesses and owning a small business or being self-employed is an important avenue to economic empowerment, particularly for people with disabilities who may benefit from greater access, freedom and flexibility at work, according to the U.S. Department of Labor;

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 1 in 4 Black Americans has a disability;

WHEREAS, inclusive procurement practices not only benefit marginalized business owners but also enhance overall economic growth and innovation;

WHEREAS, existing programs aimed at promoting diversity in procurement often overlook businesses owned by individuals with disabilities and Black Americans, which leads to disparities in opportunities and resources available to these businesses that can further perpetuate cycles of poverty and limit economic mobility for individuals with disabilities, particularly in communities of color;

WHEREAS, the inclusion of businesses owned by individuals with disabilities in state procurement processes is vital to fostering a fair and equitable economy, ensuring that all voices and talents are represented; and

WHEREAS, state governments play a crucial role in leading by example and ensuring that procurement policies are reflective of our diverse populations, including those with disabilities.

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) urges state policymakers to adopt comprehensive disability procurement policies that:

- Establish clear goals to ensure adequate participation and conducted outreach to increase the participation of disability-owned and Black-owned businesses in state contracting;
- Implement training programs for procurement officials to ensure understanding of accessibility requirements and the benefits of diversity in contracting; and
- Establish procurement set-asides, create contract bid preferences for disability-owned and Black-owned businesses and require consideration of quotes from designated businesses, including black-owned and disability-owned businesses.

Resolution ID: BED-25-13

Sponsored by: Rep. Dontavius Jarrells (OH) and Rep. Ajay Pittman (OK)

Policy Committee: Business and Economic Development (BED)