



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON
ARTS, TOURISM, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT ON AB 1669: CALIFORNIA
HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DISTRICT PROGRAM**

April 11, 2023

Bianca Blomquist, California Policy Director
Small Business Majority

Thank you Chairwoman Quirk-Silva and members of the Committee,

My name is Bianca Blomquist and I'm the California Policy Director for Small Business Majority, a small business organization with several offices in California and nationwide. Our mission is to empower America's diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. I am here to share our support for AB 1669, legislation that would establish the California Historically Significant District Program, an important program that can revitalize and support historically and culturally significant commercial corridors and small businesses in the state.

Small businesses in California have experienced continued challenges in starting, operating and growing their enterprises. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of these issues and inequities, which is why it's essential for state and federal legislators to continue to find ways to support the community of small businesses. One successful approach to supporting these job creators is the quick and creative deployment of funding assistance programs in California.

The enactment and creation of the California Historically Significant District Program is yet another dynamic and efficient strategy to support small businesses in California, especially those located in historically and culturally significant commercial corridors. The program would increase the capacity of local commercial districts to meet the needs of underserved business owners, including businesses owned by women and people of color. This is particularly vital because underserved entrepreneurs continue to face inequities in access to capital and technical assistance, leaving them behind in comparison to larger businesses that are well connected and funded.

As you may know, maintaining historically significant buildings can create an added expense for business owners, while also limiting them in changing or adjusting their storefronts to attract new clientele. And at a time when they're cash strapped, initiatives like the California Historically Significant District Program can help them revitalize through technical assistance funding, training and other activities that increase the capacity to operate, adapt and meet their unique needs.

We urge you to consider this initiative as you continue to explore statewide strategies that can support small business owners in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bianca Blomquist".

Bianca Blomquist
California Policy Director, Small Business Majority