

2025 August Recess - Advocacy Toolkit

With members of Congress returning to their home states and districts for the August recess, now is a critical opportunity to connect with your congressional delegation and make your voice heard as a local small business owner. Whether it be tariffs, taxes, access to capital, healthcare or workforce issues, your representatives need to hear from you to better understand how Congress can support the growth and prosperity of small businesses nationwide.

This Advocacy Toolkit will provide you with the information and guidance necessary to engage with members of your congressional delegation while they are back in your communities.

What You'll Learn:

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 - Examples of advocacy activities
- 2. Small Business Majority's Policy Priorities**
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- 3. State of Play in Washington – Key Priorities in Congress for Small Businesses**
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Advocacy Basics - Why Advocacy is Important and How to Get Involved

The power of your voice:

As a small business owner, you are a **trusted voice** within your community and a valuable resource for federal and state policymakers seeking insights on policies and programs that support small businesses as vital pillars of local communities. In fact, polling has shown that small business owners are more trusted than churches, academic institutions and large corporations.

Examples of advocacy activities:

Engaging in advocacy campaigns can look different for every individual, depending on the time and resources you can commit. For example, advocacy can be as simple as signing your name on a letter or emailing an elected official. It can also be as intensive as attending meetings with members of Congress in Washington, D.C., organizing a town hall event or speaking at a press conference. Successful advocacy campaigns leverage any and all activities to build support for the issue at hand, which requires robust participation at each level.

Small Business Majority's Policy Priorities

To ensure that the unique needs of America's small businesses and entrepreneurs are represented in the halls of Congress, Small Business Majority advocates across several policy priorities that ensure the growth of a robust small business ecosystem.

Increase equitable access to capital and opportunities for entrepreneurs

- Expand access to small dollar loans and transparent, responsible capital that supports micro and early-stage entrepreneurship with a focus on under-resourced communities.
- Modernize federal resources and streamline regulations to ensure that tools and technical assistance, including procurement opportunities, are geared towards helping the millions of our smallest businesses succeed in today's economy.

Bolster a Main Street-friendly workforce and the creation of quality jobs

- Expand access to affordable quality healthcare for small business owners, employees and self-employed entrepreneurs.
- Provide support for small business owners seeking to offer long-term employee benefits such as childcare, reproductive healthcare, paid family and medical leave, and retirement plans.
- Enact commonsense immigration reforms and oppose mass deportations of immigrants to bolster an essential small business workforce.

Foster a level playing field for American small businesses

- Implement bottom-up business tax policies that prioritize the needs of true Main Street enterprises, not large corporations or the wealthy.
- Enforce antitrust and competition laws to give small business owners a chance to compete in today's increasingly consolidated economy.
- Oppose radical tariff increases to ensure that small businesses' supply costs enable them to compete in a global marketplace.

State of Play in Washington – Key Priorities in Congress for Small Businesses

Reconciliation – What the 'One Big, Beautiful Bill' means for your small businesses

After months of negotiations between congressional Republicans and the White House, Congress recently passed sweeping budget legislation, the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), which includes well over \$1 trillion in spending cuts to critical programs like Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These cuts are being used to help offset roughly \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts, including several business provisions, that represent the centerpiece of the bill. **It is estimated that the OBBBA will add at least \$3.4 trillion to the deficit over the next decade.**

- **Cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act:** Millions of small business owners and employees rely on Medicaid and the ACA for affordable healthcare coverage. In fact, more than half of all ACA Marketplace enrollees are either small business owners or employees, and 20% of small business owners, employees, and their family members are covered by Medicaid.

This bill makes significant structural changes to Medicaid and the ACA, represented by more than \$1 trillion in spending cuts to the programs, and fails to extend the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits (PTCs), which help millions of small business owners and employees lower the annual cost of their health insurance premiums. **It is estimated that the provisions included in the bill, along with the expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits, will result in 17 million individuals losing healthcare coverage over the next decade.**

- **Business tax provisions:** The bill makes permanent several tax provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) that were set to expire at the end of this year. Relevant changes to business tax provisions include:
 - **Sec. 199A pass-through deduction:** Permanently extends the 20% deduction for qualifying business income (QBI) and includes a new minimum deduction of \$400 for pass-through entities with at least \$1,000 in QBI.
 - **Bonus Depreciation:** Permanently extends and modifies 100% bonus depreciation for property acquired after January 19, 2025.

- **Research and Experimental (R&E) Expenditures:** Permanently reinstates an immediate deduction for domestic research and experimental expenditure costs for tax years beginning after December 31, 2024.
- **Sec. 179 expensing of certain depreciable business assets:** Increases the maximum amount a business may expense, for the cost of qualifying property like equipment and machinery, under Sec. 179 to \$2.5 million, reduced by the amount by which the cost of qualifying property exceeds \$4 million.

The permanent extension of the 20% deduction under Sec. 199A represents a missed opportunity for Congress to revisit how the deduction can better serve true small businesses. Currently, over half of the benefit claimed under 199A goes to the top 1% of income earners while business owners with Adjusted Gross Incomes (AGI) of \$100,000 or less receive an average deduction of just under \$2,000. Permanently extending the 20% deduction without efforts for targeted reforms will continue to widen the gap between Main Street businesses and the wealthiest taxpayers who continue to reap the rewards of this so-called “small business deduction.” And while Small Business Majority was encouraged to see the creation of a new minimum deduction, it is far too modest to make any real impact.

To address these disparities, Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI) worked closely with Small Business Majority to introduce the [Mom and Pop Tax Relief Act \(H.R. 3249\)](#) which would have replaced the 20% deduction with a simplified deduction of up to \$25,000. This approach would better prioritize the needs of the smallest businesses by delivering greater tax savings that can be reinvested in the development and growth of the business. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), during the OBBB debate, offered an amendment similar to H.R. 3249 to improve the deduction, but it was not included in the final bill.

Government funding – Small business programs at risk

Each year, Congress is tasked with passing a federal budget for the fiscal year (FY) ahead by October 1. This process, which is spearheaded by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, determines funding levels for federal agencies and programs—including those that support small businesses, such as the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), and the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund.

The annual federal budget process traditionally starts when the president submits a detailed budget request to Congress, outlining the administration's desired funding levels for the FY ahead. In May, President Trump sent his FY26 budget request to Congress, which recommended slashing non-defense discretionary spending by \$163 billion (23%), including the following proposed cuts to the agencies and programs that serve small businesses:

- **Elimination of all SBA entrepreneurial development programs**, except Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). Eliminated programs include Women’s Business Centers (WBCs), Veterans Outreach Business Centers (VBOCs), and the SCORE program
- **Elimination of the MBDA**

- **Elimination of all U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs that serve rural businesses**, except the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program
- **Elimination of all CDFI Fund discretionary award programs** which amount to a \$291 million cut to the Fund

**These are merely recommendations from the President to Congress, which retains the final authority over government funding levels.*

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are currently in the process of negotiating and advancing their 12 respective appropriations bills, which allocate funding across federal agencies and programs. It is rumored that Congress will be unable to come together to pass an FY26 package that wins support from all parties and factions, and that a continuing resolution measure (maintaining FY25 levels) will be more likely to pass.

Identifying the Issues that Matter Most to You and Your Business

Before requesting a meeting with your member of Congress, it's important to identify the specific issues affecting your business that you want to discuss. For example, if the recent Medicaid cuts passed by Congress or the upcoming expiration of the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits put you or your employees at risk of losing access to healthcare coverage, that would be an important issue to raise with your member of Congress.

Congress will have just one month to finalize and pass the FY26 budget after returning from August recess in early September. That makes **now** the critical time to urge your lawmakers to protect—and expand—funding for key small business programs at the SBA, MBDA, and CDFI Fund. These agencies provide essential resources that help entrepreneurs access capital, technical assistance, and support in their communities.

If you've benefited from SBA resource partners and programs, like Women's Business Centers, or MBDA programs, or received support from a local CDFI, we strongly encourage you to share your story with your members of Congress and urge them not to cut funding for these vital programs.

Ways to Get Involved During August Recess

- **Host your member of Congress at your business:** A great way to get involved during August recess is to host your member of Congress at your business to show them around and discuss how Congress can address the top issues your business is facing. More information on requesting a site visit with your member of Congress is below.
- **Stop by your member of Congress's district or regional office:** U.S. Representatives typically have at least one office located in your district, while U.S. Senators often maintain two or more regional offices throughout your state. Visiting your member's district or regional office offers an opportunity to connect directly with district staff, or even the member themselves if they happen to be present during your visit. To find your U.S. Representative's or U.S. Senator's district or regional office address, please visit their official website.

- **Call or email your member of Congress:** A simple, but effective, way to make your voice heard is by calling or emailing your member of Congress at their DC or district office. When calling or emailing your member of Congress, be sure to introduce yourself and your business, explain the issue you're contacting them about, and share how it directly impacts your business and the local community. Personalizing your message makes it more powerful and helps lawmakers understand the real-world consequences of their decisions.
- **Participate in state-based town hall events with your members of Congress:** Members of Congress frequently host local town hall events and listening sessions when they are back in their respective states and districts. A great way to hear more about your members' priorities is to attend these local events. Constituents also usually have the chance to ask questions and share their concerns directly with the member.
- **Share your story with Small Business Majority:** Small Business Majority connects small business owners with media outlets and policymakers to help them make their voices heard. You can [share your story here](#) or contact Robert Bennett at rbennett@smallbusinessmajority.org.

To identify your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators, you can search via zip code or address on the [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) website. To find contact information for your Representative's or Senator's Washington, D.C. and district offices, please visit their official website or follow the prompts in the link above.

Please note, the Small Business Majority team wants to help you succeed. If we can be of assistance in your efforts to host your representatives, please let us know.

Tips for requesting a meeting with your member of Congress

- Identify your member of Congress. Requesting a meeting or inviting your [U.S. Representative](#), as opposed to one of your states' Senators, to your business often provides a better chance of securing a meeting.
- Identify which issues you would like to discuss with your member of Congress during the meeting or visit.
- Identify a timeframe in which you would like to meet with your member of Congress. Members of Congress' schedules are often very busy and evolve by the day. When requesting a meeting, it is best to provide the office with multiple dates and times that work for your schedule and to be flexible with last-minute changes.
- Email your Representative's or Senator's district office to request a meeting. For assistance with requesting a meeting, contact:
 - **Connor Coursey:** ccoursey@smallbusinessmajority.org
 - **Alexis D'Amato:** adamato@smallbusinessmajority.org

When reaching out to your member of Congress to request a site visit or meeting, you're welcome to use the email template below as a reference

My name is [Your Name], and I am the owner of [Business Name], a [brief description of business, e.g., local bakery/manufacturing firm/childcare center] located in [City/Town], [State].

I am writing to invite [Name of Rep. or Sen.] to visit my business and meet with our team. As a constituent and local small business owner, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about the challenges and opportunities facing my small business—particularly around [brief mention of key issues, e.g., access to capital, healthcare costs, or tariffs and how these issues are impacting your operations or employees.]

[If you have a personal connection to your member of Congress or would like to applaud them for something they said or did recently (especially if it relates to small business), feel free to include that here.]

If [Name of Rep. or Sen.] is interested in visiting [Business Name] during the August recess, I've included several suggested dates below. If none of these dates work, I'd be happy to coordinate a time that better fits [his/her] schedule. If [Name of Rep. or Sen.] is unable to meet or visit my business, I would welcome an opportunity to meet with [his/her] staff.

[recommend several options for meeting dates/times over the month of August, weekends included if possible]

Thank you for your consideration of this request and I look forward to the opportunity to host [Name of Rep. or Sen.] at [Name of Business]. Please let me know if you have any questions. My email, phone number, and business address are listed below.

[List email, phone number, and business address]

Sincerely

[Your Name, Business Name]

Helpful Tips for Meeting with Your Representatives

Know before you go: Before requesting or attending a meeting with a member of Congress, it is always important to have an understanding of the constituency they represent, their top priorities, their committee assignments, and their past record on any similar issues that you will be advocating for.

Always come prepared: As you prepare for your meeting, establish a clear agenda to keep your talking points focused and on track. Here are a few quick tips to ensure your meeting is productive and goal-oriented:

- **Introduce your business** - what is your business and what issues are you here to discuss? These meetings are quite short, so please keep this information concise.

- **Describe your community impact** - How does your business add value to your community?
- **Distinguish an ask or a plan (know your talking points)** – what do you want them to know or do (e.g., vote for a bill or change a regulation, visit your business)?
- **Provide a sound rationale** – why do you want them to do it (e.g., what good or bad result will occur)?
- **Explain the implications for constituents** – who will be helped?
- **Offer next steps** – what is the best course of action and how can you stay involved?

How to adapt your advocacy based on your audience and the current legislative session: When speaking to an elected official or their staff, it is important to take into consideration the current political landscape and the respective elected officials party membership so you can deliver your message in the most effective and respectful manner.

Thank You!

Before you get started, Small Business Majority would like to sincerely thank you for engaging in these advocacy efforts to ensure the voices of small business owners like you are represented at the negotiating table during this critical period. Advocacy is the most important piece of the puzzle when it comes to understanding how to influence the decisions being made in Washington, DC, and we are most effective when small businesses share their stories, talk to lawmakers and make the “business case” for policy priorities that will help unleash economic growth across the nation.

Thank you for your time and we hope that you will continue to remain an engaged advocate in our network.

About Small Business Majority

Small Business Majority is a national small business organization that empowers America's diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. We engage our network of more than 85,000 small businesses and 1,500 business and community organizations to deliver resources to entrepreneurs and advocate for public policy solutions that promote inclusive small business growth. Our work is bolstered by extensive research and deep connections with the small business community that enable us to educate stakeholders about key issues impacting America's entrepreneurs, with a special focus on the smallest businesses and those facing systemic inequities.