

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS**

ON

**HARNESSING THE POWER OF IMMIGRANT-OWNED BUSINESSES TO BUILD BACK
BETTER**

April 28, 2021

Sayuri Tsuchitani, Owner

Headspa EN, Los Angeles, CA

Thank you, Madam Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sayuri Tsuchitani. Thank you for allowing me to share comments about the role immigrant-owned businesses play in the American economy, and why it's important to advance policies to support and encourage immigrant entrepreneurship.

Where I grew up Japan, there was an expectation of what girls should and should not do. I never fit into that mold, and I always wanted more. Now, years later, I'm pursuing my dream in Los Angeles as the owner and operator of Headspa EN, which seeks to redefine the salon experience with head and scalp massages that bring Eastern techniques of relaxation and stress relief to a Western audience.

However, as an immigrant entrepreneur, owning my own business has not been a smooth road, especially during the past year, and I know I am not alone. More than 63% of AAPI business owners report that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative effect on their business, compared to 59% of all small business owners nationwide¹. Personally, I moved my business location in March of 2020 just two weeks before shutdowns completely halted my business. Since then, I've endured temporary closures and challenges in accessing emergency relief.

Last summer, I applied for the first round of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) but was denied. However, with new changes made to the latest round of changes to PPP by the Biden Administration, I was able to access funds for the first time, which will help me on my road to recovery. These changes were critical to ensuring that business owners like me are able to access the resources we need to keep our businesses going during this difficult time.

I encourage this Committee to consider additional ways to ensure that immigrant business owners and other under-represented business communities have the tools they need to survive and be successful after the pandemic. It's important to consider that immigrant-owned businesses are the fastest growing segment of small businesses in this country. Not only are we fueling our local economies, but we are also giving back to our communities. For example, when I'm not working, you can find me at a local Japanese retirement and assisted-living community where I offer my services to the elderly.

Despite our contributions, we are under attack. The rise in discrimination and violence against the AAPI community over the past year has impacted my ability to do business safely and to keep my

¹ Small Business Majority, January 2021, "Small Businesses Continue to Face Closures in 2021," <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/small-businesses-continue-face-closures-2021>

customers safe. We need more awareness of and sensitivity to how rhetoric can go a long way in allyship and protecting Asian immigrants in the United States.

I am honored to serve my community, and it's vital that Congress and the Administration take steps to support immigrant entrepreneurs like me because we are the future of the American economy.

Thank you,

Sayuri Tsuchitani, Owner
Headspa EN, Los Angeles