



*Her Business. Our Economy.*

**Contact:** Antonella Pianalto  
**Phone:** (703) 395-9628  
**Email:** [apianalto@awbc.org](mailto:apianalto@awbc.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **AWBC Applauds the Introduction of The Women's Small Business Ownership Act**

Washington, D.C. October 2, 2015 - The Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC) applauds the introduction of The Women's Small Business Ownership Act of 2015, a bill to reauthorize and modernize the Women's Business Center program, by Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Chair David Vitter (R-LA), Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA).

For the past 27 years, the national network of over 100 Women's Business Centers (WBC) has operated effectively and efficiently, strengthening the ability of nearly two million women entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses.

"The AWBC is excited that Senators Cantwell, Vitter and Shaheen have introduced legislation that has been a long time in coming. The Women's Business Centers have been on the frontlines of training, counseling and providing a pathway to capital for women since its inception. Demand for WBCs' services continues to grow as a result of the explosion of women entrepreneurs, which now total nearly 10 million," said Antonella Pianalto, Association of Women's Business Centers President and CEO.

The bill provides authorization for the WBC program to \$21.75 Million from the current authorization of \$14.5 Million. The bill also increases grant levels available to eligible women's business centers to \$250,000, from \$150,000. In addition, the bill streamlines the paperwork required of the WBCs and encourages new programming.

"While the current network of WBCs provide tremendous support to women who want to start and grow businesses, we know that they are just scratching the surface of the assistance needed. This important legislation provides greater resources to WBCs to reach more women. We consider this landmark legislation for women business owners and are grateful to Senators Cantwell, Vitter and Shaheen for their support," continued Pianalto.

### **About AWBC**

The AWBC is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1998 to support the national network of more than 100 Women's Business Centers (WBC). WBCs have more than 25 years of success in providing business training, counseling, mentoring, and access to capital to women entrepreneurs. Last year, more than 140,000 clients were served, adding to the more than one and a half million served in the last ten years. The WBC program is a public-private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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