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The Association of Women's Business Centers Applauds the Introduction of the Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC) applauds the introduction of H.R. 1680, the [Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017](#). The bill, authored by Representative Steve Knight (CA-25), would re-authorize the program to provide additional funding, reduce burdensome requirements, and ensure women entrepreneurs have access to the resources that can help start and grow their business. The AWBC is the advocate for the national network of women's business centers operating as public-private partnerships with the Small Business Administration.

“Strengthening the WBC program, which has been on the frontlines of training, counseling and providing a pathway to capital for women, is our top priority,” according to AWBC President and CEO Antonella Pianalto. “This bill will help WBCs meet the growing demand for services as a result of the explosion of women entrepreneurs.”

For the past 29 years, the national network of over 100 WBCs has operated effectively and efficiently, strengthening the ability of nearly two million women entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. In 2016 alone, women's business centers trained and counseled more than 145,000 entrepreneurs. Through AWBC, these centers can exchange best practices, interact with local, state, and federal policymakers, and improve their abilities to serve women business owners.

The Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017 would strengthen the program by authorizing up to \$21.75 million in funding, increasing grant levels up to \$185,000, and establishing standards for an accreditation while encouraging innovation in training and counseling.

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About the Association of Women's Business Centers (<http://awbc.org>): 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. The WBC program is a public-private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.