



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**The Association of Women's Business Centers applauds the passage of the Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017 by the U.S. House of Representatives**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC) applauds the passage of [H.R. 1680: Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017](#) by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill, authored by Representative Stephen Knight (CA-25) with bi-partisan support from co-sponsors, Representatives Al Lawson (FL-5), Stephanie Murphy (FL-7), Josh Gottheimer (NJ-5), and Barbara Comstock (VA-10), re-authorizes the Women's Business Center (WBC) program and provides additional funding and flexibility that modernizes this important program.

The AWBC is the advocate for the national network of women's business centers (WBCs) operating as a public-private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration. Upon the news, AWBC Interim President & CEO, Bonnie Nawara, released the following statement:

"We are pleased with the passage of H.R. 1680 and thankful for the work that Representative Stephen Knight has put forth on behalf of WBCs since the introduction of this bill in 2017. This bill will provide needed support for the WBC program to continue their work and supply the necessary investment women entrepreneurs need and deserve to reach their full potential. We are hopeful that the Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017 will also garner the support necessary to pass in the U.S. Senate."

The Women's Business Centers Improvements Act of 2017 would strengthen the WBC program by authorizing up to \$21.75 million in funding and increasing grant levels up to \$185,000 for FY2018, while also establishing standards for an accreditation and encouraging innovation in training and counseling. The network of more than 100 WBCs across the country relies on support from legislators to advocate for policies that help women entrepreneurs succeed.

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***About AWBC:** The AWBC ([www.awbc.org](http://www.awbc.org)) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1998 to support the national network of Women's Business Centers (WBCs) with programming and advocacy. Each year, our members leverage WBC grants to operate more than 150 locations throughout the United States. 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.*