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It's time for small business owners to walk the halls of Congress

By Lani Hay - 01/18/11 04:25 PM ET

When an entrepreneur or a small business owner has a problem, what does he or she do? The answer is simple; they usually roll up their sleeves and handle the problem themselves. With that approach, America's small business owners and entrepreneurs are now rolling up their sleeves and solving America's problems in Congress.

Small business owners are moving to our nation's capital to make a difference. In the 2010 elections, 33 small business owners were elected to Congress from both major parties. In the 2008 elections, 24 incoming members of Congress had some small business experience according to the Small Business Advocate, a monthly newsletter published by the SBA's Office of Advocacy. With the current state of America's economy and the role small businesses play as the economic engine that runs our country, it is small businesses and entrepreneurs that tend to lead our nation out of recessions and perennially lead job creation and growth.

According to SBA, small businesses employ over half of all private-sector employees. As more former small business owners and entrepreneurs walk the halls of Congress, their imperative to get things done will be felt, as will their commitment to making decisions that impact Main Street job creation.

Small business owners know how to meet a payroll, stick to a budget, and make difficult decisions, including cuts, when necessary. Small business owners are instantly accountable for decisions they make, and learn to make them carefully but well. Good decision-making keeps their doors open – flawed decisions can close them forever. Having more new members in Congress who have experience making difficult decisions, know how to create jobs, and have lived under these rigorous survival conditions will instill in Congress a refreshing drive for results.

As we begin the new year, these former entrepreneurs will also help Congress address issues facing small businesses in 2011. Small businesses need access to capital to allow their operations to grow. Lines of credit, loans and other debt financing need to reopen for small-business owners if we are to accelerate the slow growth of the economy. The fact is, "Main Street" is probably no longer an apt way to refer to the small business sector. A strong breed of new small businesses are vitally involved in innovation, defense programs, searches for the cure for cancer, development of new and efficient management initiatives, information technology development and other highly technical and specialized work. These rapidly growing small businesses compete toe-to-toe with their larger counterparts in an ever

increasing race to replace old ways of doing things with new products, processes, and efficiencies.

Small business has led the country out of recessions in the past and is doing so again. Former small business owners as Congressional representatives will make important economic, job creation and public accountability decisions. They are the right people at the right time in Congress. Their impatience with rules and obstacles sacred to existing representatives will probably be a friction plate between them and their other colleagues. No doubt, however, they will quickly learn how to effectively get things done and their colleagues will hopefully learn result-oriented decision-making from them. The reality of their presence and their anticipated drive toward results makes this business owner happy to see that small businesses and the country will have some of these types of people walking the halls of Congress.

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