

Oct 09 2009

## **Landrieu, Snowe Express Disappointment Over Removal of Contracting Amendment**

---

WASHINGTON – United States Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Chair Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., and Ranking Member Olympia J. Snowe, R-Maine, today issued the following statements upon learning that their Small Business Parity amendment to the Senate’s version of the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 was removed during conference negotiations. The amendment sought to place the three small business government contracting programs - HUBZone, 8(a), and service-disabled veterans – on an equal playing field when competing for federal contracts.

“I am extremely disappointed that my colleagues did not find this provision important enough to remain in the bill,” Senator Landrieu said. “The ongoing controversy over the order of contracting priority between Service Disabled Veteran’s small business programs, the HUBZone program and the 8(a) Business Development Program needs immediate attention. This Senate-backed amendment places all of these programs on a level playing field when competing for contracts. I urge members of Congress to reconsider their support of this amendment for the sake of small business owners. In addition to the fact that these small businesses should be given the opportunity to compete equally, placing one program over another has created confusion and disarray among contracting officers and small business owners alike, which essentially hinders the potential success of these small businesses.”

“It is truly unsettling that members of the House decided to strip this critical provision in conference,” said Ranking Member Snowe. “I introduced legislation back in July to fix this inequity based on concerns I had heard from numerous small business stakeholders, and the situation has not gotten better. Our amendment would help remedy these concerns by providing parity for small business contracting programs, and I will continue to push for its passage through other avenues.”

Senator Landrieu and Ranking Member Snowe introduced the amendment in response to two Government Accountability Office decisions that contradicted a long-standing SBA interpretation that the Agency’s procurement programs should be treated equally when it comes to awarding contracts. The decisions stated that the HUBZone program had preference over all other small business contracting programs. Accordingly, the amendment would provide equity for the SBA’s small business contracting programs.