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THE BLOG

Obama Forum Dominated By Angry Small Business Owners

© 06/29/2010 09:15 am ET | Updated May 25, 2011

 Like 0**Lloyd Chapman** 
Small business advocate

On Monday, June 28, over 300 angry small business owners attended an Obama Administration small business forum at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Obama Administration officials who hosted a series of discussion groups were bombarded with complaints from hostile small business owners regarding a variety of subjects. A common theme shared by many attendees was anger over having to compete against large businesses for federal small business contracts.

Dozens of attendees were visibly irritated when Small Business Administration Administrator Karen Mills attempted to claim 30 percent of contract dollars allocated under the federal stimulus went to small businesses. The American Small Business League (ASBL) estimates that small businesses received less than three percent of stimulus funds.

Mill's comments raised eyebrows again when she claimed that small business contracting information coming from the SBA was "clean and accurate."

As recently as February of 2010, the Inspector general for the SBA found that the agency itself was awarding more than 30 percent of its own small business contracts to large businesses. Additionally, [the report found](#) that 97 percent of the contracts reviewed contained erroneous data.

One attendee commented that if President Obama really wanted to help small businesses, he would honor his campaign promise to, "[end the diversion of federal small business contracts to corporate giants.](#)"

In Administrator Mill's closing comments she promised that comments from the meeting would be included in the Obama Interagency small business taskforce recommendations.

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The ASBL predicts, that in reality, none of the comments from the small business community will be included in the taskforce's recommendations. Quite to the contrary, the ASBL strongly believes the Obama Administration will use the task force to roll out a variety of anti small business policies, such as changing the definition of small business from independently owned to include firms owned and controlled by some of the nation's wealthiest venture capitalists.

In the four hour meeting not one person recommended that the federal definition of a small business, as being independently owned, be modified in any way. Since President Obama appointed a venture capitalist to head the SBA and the SBA Office of Advocacy, I am expecting that they'll try to break up the SBA and change the definition of small business to include firms that are owned and controlled by some of the nation's wealthiest venture capitalists. That could divert billions of dollars a year away from the nation's legitimate small businesses and have a significant negative effect on job creation.

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