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THE BLOG

Obama Small Business Forum Was A Slap In The Face To Small Businesses

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 Like 11**Lloyd Chapman** 
Small business advocate


I attended the Obama Administration's small business forum in Washington D.C. on Monday, June 28. Virtually every aspect of the event clearly demonstrated that President Obama and the members of his administration could not care less about what small business owners think. After attending the event it is obvious to me that President Obama has absolutely no intention of adopting any pro-small business policies.

I predict President Obama will use his Small Business Task Force and the Small Business Forum as a ploy to adopt anti-small business policies that will reduce federal contracting opportunities for legitimate small businesses. I believe the recommendations that will come from the task force will divert billions of dollars in federal small business contracts to large businesses and wealthy venture capitalists that backed President Obama's campaign.

Here are some of the reasons I am expecting anti-small business policies from President Obama.

How about a national "small business forum" that lasted three and a half hours. It would be impossible to find another example anywhere in government where a national forum lasted three and half hours. The supposed purpose of the forum was to hear comments from the attendees. Only 150 minutes was allocated for the approximately 300 attendees to be heard. That's 30 seconds per person. The event was announced just two weeks before it began and interested small business owners were given just one week to register.

I believe the event was specifically designed to discourage small business owners from outside the Washington D.C. area from attending. Would you fly to Washington for a three and a half hour meeting where you might not even get in or be allowed to

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speaking? Their plan worked because over 90 percent of the firms in attendance were from the D.C. area.

There were four microphones placed around the auditorium. Small business owners that wanted to speak lined up behind the microphones at the beginning of each discussion. During each of the three 50 minute discussion sessions only half of the people in line were heard.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Karen Mills spoke at the "national small business forum" for just ten minutes and did not take any comment or questions. Unbelievable.

Mills promised all the comments from the meeting would be included in the task force recommendations. This is where I expect the real deception to take place. In addition to the oral comments at the event, the task force is taking written comments. I have seen this tactic used before by the SBA to try and justify anti-small business policies. They will propose a staggering anti-small business policy and then claim that small business owners requested it. They used this technique to propose a grandfathering policy, which allowed Fortune 500 firms to keep federal small business contracts for five years. The SBA claimed small business owners requested the grandfathering policy. As much as \$500 billion in federal small business contracts have been diverted to Fortune 500 firms and large business under the SBA grandfathering policy.

In 2006, the SBA removed the annual revenue and the number of employees of all government contractors from the government's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. This made it much more difficult to determine if a firm that had received a federal small business contract was actually a legitimate small business. The SBA claimed the move was prompted by calls from small business owners.

The most insulting aspect of the Obama "Small Business Task Force" and the Obama "National Small Business Forum" is the absurd notion that President Obama does not know what to do to help small business land more federal contracts, and is desperately searching for new ideas. Here is a new idea for President Obama, why don't you do what you said you would do during the campaign.

During the Presidential campaign, then Senator Barack Obama released the statement, "It is time to end the diversion of federal small business contracts to corporate giants."

http://www.barackobama.com/2008/02/26/the_american_small_business_le.php If President Obama would just keep this one campaign promise to the nation's 27 million small business owners, it would quadruple the volume of federal small business contracts flowing to legitimate small business and create more jobs than any proposal that has ever been proposed by his administration or Congress.

The fact that this will never happen is proof President Obama is not the man we all hoped he would be, and our government is as corrupt as ever.

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