

The Black Community will not be left in the COVID-19 boat of despair while white business owners receive the lion's share of no-bid contracts, and financial relief is doled out to others!



Congressional Black Caucus
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Via Email: Black.Caucus@mail.house.gov

Dear Congressional Black Caucus:

NYC's Black Business Empowerment Committee (BBE) based in the village of Harlem, New York, is concerned that the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) did not represent the Black business community well as Congress negotiated the funding of coronavirus relief efforts.

On March 20, 2020, the Congressional Black Caucus sent a letter to Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer with the stated purpose of offering proposals to assist Black Americans for consideration as Congress negotiated the funding of coronavirus relief efforts. The letter proposed 94 initiatives totaling approximately \$450 Billion; only 3 speak directly to Black People and only one has a dollar value attached to it: ① Relief for Black Farmers, ② \$3 billion in emergency funding to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and Minority Serving Institutions and ③ Restoration of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. **Mentioned in the CBC press release, but not in the letter is: Black Businesses: Give the Minority Business Development Agency \$10 million to make grants to minority-owned businesses.**

The Small Business Administration defines minority-owned business as—a company that is minimally 51% owned, operated, and controlled by a minimum of one U.S. citizen whose ethnic background is at least 25% Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, or Native American. In NYC, Black people are roughly 22% of the population and Black businesses receive less than 2% of NYC/ NYS agency contracts and Black people own less than 2% of all businesses in NYC and NYS. In effect Minority means everyone but White Males and Black people...it does not mean Black.

'Minority-owned' businesses are mentioned specifically in five (5) proposals: ① 0% loans to Support MDIs, ② \$3B for the MBDA to minimize the economic impacts on MBE's, ③ \$50 billion in SBA grant funding for small and minority businesses, ④ Prioritize minority press for federal advertising contracts and ⑤ Emergency grant funding to support investments in technology, cyber-security, and resilience by small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans. **As stated previously, Minority ≠ Black!**

The Negro has been inflicted with 244 years of slavery and 100 years of segregation. And so with the legacy of these two unjust systems facing him, it is only natural that he is way behind. And he has been out of the mainstream of American life; he has been on the periphery of American life for all of these years. And it would really be a miracle, that history hasn't seen for someone to start exactly 344 years behind in a race and get ahead or catch up—unless something special is done. We've had special treatment in the negative sense for 344 years. Now we've got to get special treatment in the positive sense, in order to catch up and improve these lagging standards."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1964 —

'Women-owned' businesses are mentioned specifically in two (2) proposals: ① \$50 billion in SBA grant funding for small and women owned businesses and ② Emergency grant funding to support investments in technology, cyber-security, and resilience by small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans. **In this case, one proposal has a dollar value attached and the second calls for grant funding for 'minority' and 'women' owned businesses. Women ≠ Black.**

'Small Businesses' are mentioned specifically in eight (8) proposals: ① 90-day moratorium on all consumer and small business credit payments, ② \$50 billion in SBA grant funding for small and women owned businesses, ③ Reauthorization of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, ④ Grants for small business payrolls, ⑤ Government-backed interest-free loans to small businesses, ⑥ Rebate for payroll taxes paid by small businesses in "hot spots", ⑦ Emergency grant funding to support investments in technology, cyber-security, and resilience by small businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans and ⑧ Credit to small farmers. **All eight proposals mandate a level of economic benefit and not one specific mention of Black business! Small Business ≠ Black.**

The CBC's 94 initiatives totaling \$459B basically leaves the Black Business Community with nothing, especially in NYC where all other ethnic groups and white-women's participation far exceeds Black participation. BBE is most disappointed that the CBC saw fit to argue the case for minorities, women and small businesses while neglecting to propose funding specifically for Black businesses. Harlem's BBE finds this UNACCEPTABLE!

A US Census 2012 Survey of Business Owners found - there are ~ 2.6 million Black owned companies in the US. More than 95% of the Black-owned businesses are sole proprietorship or partnerships which have no paid employees. About 40% of these businesses in 2012 operated in the health care, social assistance; and other services such as repair, maintenance, personal and laundry services sectors. The site goes on to say—of the 2.6 million Black-owned businesses in 2012, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, 109,137 had paid employees. Further, Prosperity Now and the Institute for Policy Studies jointly issued a report in September 2017 that said—if current trends continue, the median household wealth for Black families will decline to \$0 by 2053. Note; this September 2017 report DID NOT account for COVID-19. Add to this a COVID-19 relief package that specifically provides approximately \$3.86 for each Black business in America and you have a recipe for how the Black community gets to \$0 wealth by 2053.

\$0 household wealth cannot be the legacy our generation leaves for our children and grandchildren!

Black businesses in America are deserving of more because some had a 400 year head start and others just got here! Our elected officials must put measures in place that will ensure the economic health of the Black community during and after the current COVID-19 crisis. NY's Black business community and the Black faith community are watching.

Respectfully – The Black Business Empowerment Committee



In the 50 years following the civil rights movement and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Black peoples' economic circumstances remain largely unchanged. As stated, if current trends continue, the median household wealth for Black families will decline to \$0 by 2053. Black businesses in America are deserving of more because some had a 400 year head start and others just got here!

Who are we?

Harlem's Black Business Empowerment Committee (BBE) is a collective of Black community organizations, churches and business owners that have come together to put forth a Plan for Black Business Empowerment. The goal is to make Black economic health and Black business empowerment a priority for all elected officials. Primary organizers:

The 400 Foundation

The 400 Foundation, a moral movement for economic equality, was birthed in February 2019 as a historical acknowledgement of the 400th year since the end of Chattel Slavery in North America and a biblical response to the Exodus liberation story after 400 years of oppression. www.the400foundation.org

Harlem Business Alliance

Since its founding in 1980 the Harlem Business Alliance (HBA) has been a force of advocacy for the development and empowerment of Harlem's small business community. HBA offers free one-on-one counseling services to aspiring entrepreneurs maneuvering through the start-up phase as well as to established small business owners. www.hbany.org

WEG

WEG is an alliance of Harlem based Black entrepreneurs formed in 2018 in an effort to level the playing field for Black business owners in NYC. WEG seeks to buck the trend by advocating for Black-owned businesses and identifying contract opportunities and Black entrepreneurs prepared to accept the opportunity. www.WEGNYC.org

For more information contact the BBE at info@wegnyc.org and visit [wegnyc](#) at twitter and/ or linkedin

#386isnotenough