

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6315

Opening Statement for Organizational Meeting
112th Congress
Sam Graves
Chairman
January 26, 2011

Good afternoon. I call the Small Business Committee organizational meeting to order.

I want to welcome all the returning and new Members of the Committee. I know that they are excited to dive in and get to work.

Before introducing the new Republican Members, I would like to take a moment to thank the Ranking Democratic Member, Congresswoman Velázquez, for her dedication and hard work on behalf of small businesses. Ranking Member Velázquez, I am looking forward to working together in the 112th Congress.

There are eight new Republican Members of the Committee. Congresswoman Renee Ellmers was a nurse in North Carolina before her election. Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler is returning to Washington, DC having once been an aide for Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers and represents the Third district of Washington. Congressman Chuck Fleischmann practiced law in Tennessee prior to his election. Congressman Jeff Landry successfully ran for office from coastal Louisiana while

operating a small oil services business. Congressman Mike Mulvaney, also an attorney, served in the South Carolina state legislature. Congressman Scott Tipton ran a small business and served in the Colorado legislature before winning his election.

Congressman Joe Walsh helped small businesses raise capital in Illinois and brings that experience to this Committee. And, Congressman Allen West served his country in the military and now serves his Florida constituents in Congress.

Also, I would like to welcome back our returning members: Mr. Bartlett from Maryland; Mr. Chabot from Ohio; Mr. Coffman from Colorado; and Mr. King from Iowa.

I now yield to the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, to introduce her members.

As Chairman of the Committee, I would like to retain the tradition of bipartisanship on this Committee that stretches back to another Missourian – former Chairman Jim Talent. Ranking Member Velázquez continued those efforts in the 110th and 111th Congresses. Although we will have differences in policy, I strongly believe that there are many issues on which we can find common ground that will help small businesses by eliminating unnecessary programs and regulations and improving efficiency of the Small Business Administration in dealing with entrepreneurs. I believe that the Rules Package and Oversight Plan under consideration today will lay the groundwork for finding those areas that we have in common while maintaining the highest levels of civility when we discuss our differences.

I now yield to the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for her opening statement.

I would like to thank the Majority and Minority staffs for their hard work and cooperation in putting together this Rules Package. Let me highlight some of the changes in the Rules that will provide greater transparency.

First, in an effort to keep Members informed, material for markups and hearings will be distributed as soon as possible and even sooner than required by the Rules of the House.

Second, Members are busy with many things, so the length of hearings will be kept short by limiting the total number of non-governmental witnesses.

Third, the public will be continually informed on Committee activities through live streaming of Committee hearings and posting material distributed to Members and their votes during markups on the Committee website.

All of these efforts will ensure the continued efficient operation of the Committee and allow us to focus on the critical policy needs of small businesses.

In addition to efficient and transparent Committee operations, I believe that the Rules Package protects the rights of the Minority by allowing it to control its budget and ensuring that subpoenas in most instances will be considered by the full Committee prior to issuance.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez for any remarks she may have on the Rules Package.

Today's second order of business is to consider the Committee's Oversight Plan. This plan represents the agenda for the Committee during the 112th Congress. I want to thank the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for her input into the Oversight Plan.

During my tenure on this Committee, I have recognized significant management issues at the Small Business Administration, discovered that small businesses must climb substantial barriers to enter the federal contracting market, and determined that federal agencies ignore the impact of their regulations on entrepreneurs. I believe that the Oversight Plan reflects these concerns and sets an appropriately aggressive agenda for the Committee to develop policies that will benefit small businesses and help the economy create much-needed jobs.

At this point I would yield to the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for any comments she may have on the oversight plan.

I would like to thank everyone and look forward to working with all of you. This meeting of the Committee on Small Business is adjourned.