

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2561 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

August 14, 2023

The Honorable Isabel Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St., SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman:

The House Committee on Small Business (the Committee) writes to inquire about the Small Business Administration's (SBA) plan to return workers to the office. The Committee has long held that the SBA's continued utilization of extreme work from home policies are ineffective and potentially detrimental to America's small businesses. Even though the Biden Administration appears desperate to walk back these disastrous policies, it seems the SBA has failed to implement an aggressive return-to-work policy.

The Committee expressed concerns about your work from home policies in our March 23, 2023, hearing titled "Oversight of the Small Business Administration." During the hearing, you responded that SBA's policy of requiring employees to work in the office just two days a pay period, or once a week, under your leadership were "mission-based" and claimed SBA's performance was "remarkable."¹ In reality, a recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and new efforts by the White House prove this claim to be questionable, at best.

Not only have these work from home policies potentially harmed small businesses, but they have also wasted American taxpayers' dollars. The GAO rated SBA's office utilization in the lowest, most underutilized group of all federal agencies.² Additionally, in a recent email, White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients called for an "aggressive return" to federal offices citing that it is critical to the well-being of our teams and will enable better results for the American people.

We are not the only committee concerned over SBA's extreme work from home policies. House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer requested detailed information on work

¹ *Oversight of the Small Business Administration: Hearing Before H. Comm. On Small Bus., 118th Cong. 24* (Mar. 23, 2023) (statement of Admin. Guzman, Adm'r, Small Bus. Ass'n).

² U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-23-106200, PRELIMINARY RESULTS SHOW FEDERAL BUILDINGS REMAIN UNDERUTILIZED DUE TO LONGSTANDING CHALLENGES AND INCREASED TELEWORK (Jul. 13, 2023).

from home and telework policies.³ A request that appears to have gone unanswered, requiring a follow up request by Chairman Comer.⁴ Our Committee similarly remains deeply concerned at SBA's dedication to enacting a return-to-work policy that will benefit America's small businesses. To that end, the Committee requests the following information as soon as possible but no later than August 28, 2023:

1. A copy of SBA's plan to aggressively implement a return-to-work policy including but not limited to:
 - a. A timeline for return to work;
 - b. The number of days in a pay period will SBA HQ staff be allowed to work from home; and
 - c. The number of days in a pay period will SBA field office employees be allowed to work from home.
2. The number of GS level employees that utilize work from home and receive pay other than base levels including the number of these employees that receive DC/DMV locality pay and the steps SBA takes to ensure SBA employees are not unjustly receiving higher locality pay.
3. The number of Senior Executive Service (SES) employees that utilize work from home.
4. The average amount of days SBA employees spend in telework status in a pay period.
5. The number of unique PIV card scans at SBA Headquarters over the last four pay periods broken out by:
 - a. Number of unique scans by week;
 - b. Number of unique scans that scanned twice in one week; and
 - c. Number of unique scans that scanned at least once each week during all four pay periods.
6. The current number of employees with SBA's Headquarters as their main office.
7. The number of disciplinary actions that have been taken against employees failing to comply with the current work from home policy.
8. The number of instances where an SBA laptop was accessed through the VPN outside of an employees home base area more than three days in a row within the last four pay periods, when an employee was not on official travel for the Agency.

To schedule the delivery of your response or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Small Business Majority Staff at (202) 225-5821. The Committee on

³ Letter from Chairman James Comer, et al, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability to Isabel Guzman, Admin., U.S. Small Business Admin. et.al. (May 18, 2023).

⁴ Letter from Chairman James Comer, et al, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability to Isabel Guzman, Admin., U.S. Small Business Admin. (Aug. 4, 2023).

The Honorable Isabel Guzman

August 14, 2023

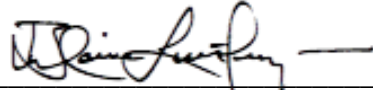
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Small Business has broad authority to investigate “problems of all types of small business” under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

In God We Trust,



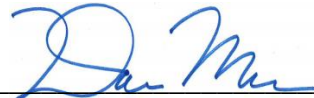
Roger Williams
Chairman
Committee on Small Business



Blaine Luetkemeyer
Vice Chairman
Committee on Small Business



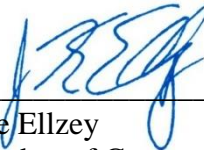
Pete Stauber
Member of Congress
Committee on Small Business



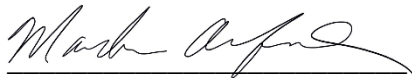
Dan Meuser
Member of Congress
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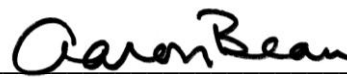
Beth Van Duyne
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Mark Alford
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Aaron Bean
Member of Congress
Committee on Small Business



Nick LaLota
Member of Congress
Committee on Small Business

cc: The Honorable Nydia M. Velasquez, Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business