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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

March 3, 2011

The Honorable Karen G. Mills
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Mills,

I am writing today, concerning the four-part Federal News Radio series published between February 7th and 10th. The reports allege retaliatory measures, illegal practices, and fraud and abuse at the Small Business Administration (SBA). While I appreciate that only one voice was represented throughout these reports, I know you will agree that any distraction that diverts the SBA from working on behalf of small business is something we can ill-afford. Moreover, while I am also aware that any alleged problems that plague the Agency today may have existed throughout multiple Administrations, this is clearly an advantageous moment for the SBA to address the way in which it develops its human capital, Agency-wide.

At a time of financial peril and economic uncertainty for the nation's job creators, it is imperative that all SBA personnel have clear and meaningufl roles and objectives that serve the larger Agency goals. Ultimately, it is the SBA's charter "...to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation...," yet the SBA will fail to fulfill its purpose if the professionals we depend upon to deliver the SBA's services feel disenfranchised, retaliated upon, or unable to perform the functions for which they have been assigned.

Reports last month address multiple charges of wrong-doing, and are largely related to human resource practices. Thus, I respectfully request that you aggressively work with the SBA Inspector General to formulate a plan that addresses the human resource issues in question, and that you then readily implement the plan with consistent oversight of the process. I request that the plan – with specific, measurable objectives and deadlines – be delivered to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship by April 4, 2011.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. I look forward to working with you to correct these problems, and building a stronger SBA.

Sincerely,

Olympia Snowe

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
Ranking Member

Cc: SBA Inspector General Peggy Gustafson