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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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March 30, 2011

The Honorable President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On the afternoon of January 21, 2011, you announced the creation of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, an initiative designed to return the unemployed – and underemployed – back to work. As you described your intent for this Council, you spoke of finding new ways to promote growth by investing in American businesses to encourage hiring, educate and train a global workforce, and recruit the best jobs and companies to the United States. One month later, as you spoke to the first meeting of the Council you stated, ***"It's critical for us to have input from folks who are actually hiring, putting people to work, making payroll, making the products and services that make our economy so powerful."*** You continued, ***"And it's going to be very important for us to get ideas from people who've actually -- are actually on the ground right now, trying to build your businesses and operate in a(n) extraordinarily competitive world."***

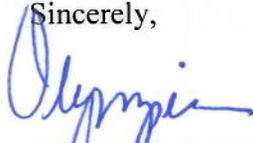
While I applaud your rationale for gathering this talented group of individuals – from General Electric and DuPont to American Express, and Southwest Airlines – to identify areas of opportunity for rebuilding today's workforce and economy, I am concerned that, in forming this Council, you have diminished the profound role small and medium-sized business fulfill in job creation, exporting, and our overall national economic recovery.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I believe that this notable absence of small business representation on the Council on Jobs and Competitiveness is regrettable and can only further expose the disconnect between the circumstances faced by CEOs and Chairmen of major corporations and venture capital firms opposed to the hard choices and obstacles America's nearly 30 million small businesses struggle with every day as they identify how to do more with significantly less. And when speaking of job creation, the numbers truly speak for themselves. The Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy calculates that small businesses in America employ over half of all private sector employees, pay 44 percent of total U.S. private payroll, have generated 64 percent of net new jobs in the past 15 years, and hire approximately 40 percent of all high-tech workers including scientists, engineers, and computer programmers. Yet, of the 26 business, academic, and labor leaders named to serve on the newly formed Council, only one appointee, Ms. Darlene Miller – owner of Permac Industries of Burnsville, Minnesota – appears to be a small business owner.

During the State of the Union Address in January, you went to great lengths to discuss the importance of small business in our economy, and justifiably so. Without small business, our nation will not experience a true recovery. That is why, as you announce additional members to this Council in the future, I strongly urge you to choose appointees from small and privately-held businesses who, like Ms. Miller, exemplify the entrepreneurial qualities you described as you launched the Council earlier this year.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and for your commitment to small businesses during this economically tumultuous time. I am sure you will agree that both small and medium-sized businesses have much to contribute toward the Council's mission, and I look forward to their contributions in getting America back to work.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE  
Ranking Member