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PETALUMA, Calif., Oct 13, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The following is a statement by the American Small Business League:

As one of the most influential minority leaders in America, I am asking for your help in stopping a policy that could cost minority communities millions of jobs. On Friday, September 9, the Obama administration proposed a policy to end one of the most successful federal programs to create jobs and stimulate growth among minority-owned small businesses.

The policy, announced in the Federal Register, aims to end a program that established a five percent minority-owned small business federal contracting goal for the Department of Defense, NASA and the U.S. Coast Guard. I estimate that this change will have a significant, negative economic impact on a substantial number of minority-owned small businesses, costing millions of jobs.

It is difficult to understand why, in the middle of one of the worst economic downturns in U.S. history, and when unemployment has hit minority communities especially hard, the Obama administration would end one of the most successful programs to create jobs for minorities. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the jobless figure for African Americans is 16 percent and 11.3 percent among Hispanics. Close to 35 percent of the U.S. population is made up of ethnic minorities and 5.8 million businesses are minority-owned. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, small businesses create 90 percent of all net new jobs in America. I estimate that this change will divert billions of dollars in federal contracts away from minority-owned small businesses, thwarting the power of those businesses to expand and hire.

I have been a small business advocate for two decades and have rarely seen policies as detrimental as this latest proposal from the Obama administration. I have launched a national campaign to block its implementation. Minority-owned small businesses have until November 8, 2011 to comment on the proposed change in the Federal Register.

The administration will tell you that the impact of this policy will be minimal and that you have been misinformed. Nothing could be further from the truth. I need you to help tell President Obama, Congress, the U.S. Justice Department and the media that there is indeed discrimination in federal contracting, and this program needs to be saved.

SOURCE: American Small Business League