

It all looked so good in the beginning. There was going to be a change. There has been a change but it is not what we expected. Unemployment is higher than ever for African Americans. While there are many reasons there is one direct correlation. The amount of contracting by Black owned firms at the federal government level has drastically been reduced. It is to the point of less than one percent. That is an all time low.

Instead of exhausting all avenues to improve the amount of Black contracting, this administration is now taking formal action to end all minority goaling from the agencies. There was a time a few years ago that HUD was enjoying a 40% level for minority contracting and most of that was with Black firms. Even the Congressional Black Caucus awarded Secretary Alphonso Jackson for that accomplishment. Today that level is below 4% and it fell with lightning speed. The following is an open letter that I received last week:

“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

We certainly agree with this association. We are calling out to all groups, associations and individuals to actively protest the above. We all should write letters to our senators, congresspersons and the Congressional Black Caucus. This is a call for action to all of us who want to see our businesses grow and increase the amount of jobs they produce. There is no time to wait. The end of the comment period for the Federal Register's Request for Comment is November 9, 2011. Please comment in the name of the African Diaspora. If you need details on how to formally comment please go to the NBCC website at www.nationalbcc.org and look under latest news. There is no time to wait.

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