

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To reauthorize the State Trade Expansion Program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To reauthorize the State Trade Expansion Program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “STEP Improvement
5 Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. STATE TRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM.**

7 (a) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 22(1)(3)
8 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(1)(3)) is amend-
9 ed—

10 (1) in subparagraph (D)—

1 (A) in clause (i), by inserting “, including
 2 a budget plan for use of funds awarded under
 3 this subsection” before the period at the end;
 4 and

5 (B) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(iii) TIMING.—The Associate Admin-
 7 istrator shall—

8 “(I) publish information on how
 9 to apply for a grant under this sub-
 10 section, including specific calculations
 11 and other determinations used to
 12 award such a grant, not later than
 13 March 31 of each year;

14 “(II) establish a deadline for the
 15 submission of applications that is not
 16 earlier than 60 days after the date on
 17 which the information is published
 18 under subclause (I) and that is not
 19 later than May 31; and

20 “(III) announce grant recipients
 21 not later than August 31 of each
 22 year.”; and

23 (2) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(E) APPLICATION INFORMATION.—The
 25 Associate Administrator shall clearly commu-

1 nicate to applicants and grant recipients any in-
2 formation about the State Trade Expansion
3 Program, including—

4 “(i) for each unsuccessful applicant
5 for a grant awarded under this subsection,
6 recommendations to improve a subsequent
7 application for such a grant; and

8 “(ii) for each successful applicant for
9 such a grant, an explanation for the
10 amount awarded, if different from the
11 amount requested in the application.

12 “(F) BUDGET PLAN REVISIONS.—

13 “(i) IN GENERAL.—A State receiving
14 a grant under this subsection may revise
15 the budget plan of the State submitted
16 under subparagraph (D) after the dis-
17 bursal of grant funds if—

18 “(I) the revision complies with al-
19 lowable uses of grant funds under this
20 subsection; and

21 “(II) such State submits notifica-
22 tion of the revision to the Associate
23 Administrator.

24 “(ii) EXCEPTION.—If a revision under
25 clause (i) reallocates 10 percent or more of

1 the amounts described in the budget plan
2 of the State submitted under subparagraph
3 (D), the State may not implement the re-
4 vised budget plan without the approval of
5 the Associate Administrator, unless the As-
6 sociate Administrator fails to approve or
7 deny the revised plan within 20 days after
8 receipt of such revised plan.”.

9 (b) SURVEY.—Section 22(l) of the Small Business
10 Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)) is amended—

11 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (7) through
12 (9) as paragraphs (8) through (10), respectively;
13 and

14 (2) by inserting after paragraph (6) the fol-
15 lowing:

16 “(7) SURVEY.—The Associate Administrator
17 shall conduct an annual survey of each State that
18 received a grant under this subsection during the
19 preceding year to solicit feedback on the program
20 and develop best practices for grantees.”.

21 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Paragraph (8)(B) of section
22 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)), as
23 so redesignated by subsection (b), is amended—

24 (1) in clause (i)—

1 (A) in subclause (III), by inserting “, in-
2 cluding the total number of eligible small busi-
3 ness concerns assisted by the program
4 (disaggregated by socially and economically dis-
5 advantaged small business concerns, small busi-
6 ness concerns owned and controlled by women,
7 and rural small business concerns)” before the
8 semicolon at the end;

9 (B) in subclause (IV), by striking “and” at
10 the end;

11 (C) in subclause (V)—

12 (i) by striking “description of best
13 practices” and inserting “detailed descrip-
14 tion of best practices”; and

15 (ii) by striking the period at the end
16 and inserting a semicolon; and

17 (D) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(VI) an analysis of the perform-
19 ance metrics described in clause (iii),
20 including a determination of whether
21 or not any goals relating to such per-
22 formance metrics were met, and an
23 analysis of the survey described in
24 paragraph (7); and

1 “(VII) a description of lessons
2 learned by grant recipients under this
3 subsection that may apply to other as-
4 sistance provided by the Administra-
5 tion.”; and

6 (2) by adding at the end the following:

7 “(iii) PERFORMANCE METRICS.—An-
8 nually, the Associate Administrator shall
9 collect data on eligible small business con-
10 cerns assisted by the program for the fol-
11 lowing performance metrics:

12 “(I) Total number of such con-
13 cerns, disaggregated by socially and
14 economically disadvantaged small
15 business concerns, small business con-
16 cerns owned and controlled by women,
17 and rural small business concerns.

18 “(II) Total dollar amount of ex-
19 port sales by eligible small business
20 concerns assisted by the program.

21 “(III) Number of such concerns
22 that have not previously participated
23 in an activity described in paragraph
24 (2).

1 “(IV) Number of such concerns
 2 that, because of participation in the
 3 program, have accessed a new market.

4 “(V) Number of such concerns
 5 that, because of participation in the
 6 program, have created new jobs.

7 “(VI) Number of such concerns
 8 participating in foreign trade missions
 9 or trade show exhibitions,
 10 disaggregated by socially and eco-
 11 nomically disadvantaged small busi-
 12 ness concerns, small business concerns
 13 owned and controlled by women, and
 14 rural small business concerns.”.

15 (d) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE SMALL
 16 BUSINESS CONCERN.—Section 22(l)(1)(A) of the Small
 17 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(l)(1)(A)) is amended—

18 (1) in clause (iii)(II), by adding “and” at the
 19 end;

20 (2) by striking clause (iv); and

21 (3) by redesignating clause (v) as clause (iv).

22 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Para-
 23 graph (10) of section 22(l) of the Small Business Act (15
 24 U.S.C. 649(l)), as so redesignated by subsection (b), is

1 amended by striking “fiscal years 2016 through 2020”
2 and inserting “fiscal years 2024 through 2028”.

3 (f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year
4 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Associate Ad-
5 ministrator for International Trade of the Small Business
6 Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the
7 State Trade Expansion Program established under section
8 22(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649(1)), as
9 amended by this section, that includes a description of—

10 (1) the process developed for review of revised
11 budget plans submitted under subparagraph (F) of
12 section 22(1)(3) of the Small Business Act (15
13 U.S.C. 649(1)(3)), as added by this Act;

14 (2) any changes made to streamline the applica-
15 tion process to remove duplicative requirements and
16 create a more transparent process;

17 (3) the process developed to share best prac-
18 tices by States described in paragraph (8)(B)(i)(V)
19 of section 22(1) of the Small Business Act (15
20 U.S.C. 649(1)), as so redesignated by this Act, par-
21 ticularly for first-time grant recipients under the
22 State Trade Expansion Program or grant recipients
23 that are facing problems using grant funds; and

24 (4) the process developed to communicate, both
25 verbally and in writing, relevant information about

1 the State Trade Expansion Program to all grant re-
2 cipients in a timely manner.