

In the Matter of:

**Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small Business
Development**

*June 7, 2017
Public Meeting*

Condensed Transcript with Word Index



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6 U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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9 INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON

10 VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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12 PUBLIC MEETING

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15 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017

16 1:00 P.M.

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25 Recorded by: Janet Evans-Watkins

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 (Meeting called to order, 1:00 p.m.)

4 MS. CARSON: Good afternoon. This is Barbara

5 Carson. I'm the Associate Administrator for the Office

6 of Veterans Business Development at the U.S. Small

7 Business Administration. We will begin the meeting now

8 with a roll call of the members of this committee.

9 I'll start in the room.

10 MR. PHIPPS: Michael Phipps, the American

11 Legion.

12 DR. GALVIN: Jim Galvin, Department of

13 Defense.

14 MR. METHENY: Bill Metheny with the Department

15 of Labor.

16 MR. KLINGELHOFER: Victor Klingelhofer,

17 Vietnam Veterans of America.

18 MR. GAVINO: Amando Gavino representing GSA.

19 MR. ARRIETA: Jose Arrieta representing GSA.

20 MS. CARSON: And members on the phone, please

21 report again.

22 MR. LENEY: Tom Leney, Department of Veterans

23 Affairs.

24 MR. ROCKEFELLER: Yes, Mark Rockefeller, with

25 the Street Shares Foundation.

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1 MS. CARSON: That was Mark Rockefeller of

2 Street Shares Foundation.

3 Go ahead. Next.

4 MS. TORRES: Beth Torres, VA.

5 MS. CARSON: Thank you, Beth.

6 MR. COLON: This is Tim Colon with the

7 Department of Treasury.

8 MS. CARSON: Thank you, Tim.

9 Okay, at this time, we just have one member --

10 agency missing, and that's Office of Management &

11 Budget, and we do expect them to join shortly.

12 But I'd like to welcome everyone here. Thank

13 you so much for making time to be here. On behalf of

14 the SBA Administrator, Linda McMahon, I welcome you to

15 SBA and look forward to a fruitful discussion on all

16 things veteran small business.

17 I know it's a particularly busy time for the

18 members here with procurement activity. It's good to

19 have money to spend, and many small business owners are

20 interested in how we're going to make that -- reduce

21 the barriers to do just that. So that's what we are

22 going to jump right into today on our agenda.

23 And for those who are on the phone and can't

24 see a screen and you wish you had those presentations,

25 you're always welcome to write us at

5

1 veteransbusiness@sba.gov.
 2 I want to share with you some of the updates
 3 that are happening in our office, the Office of
 4 Veterans Business Development. We've got several team
 5 members here today, and I thank them for getting us
 6 ready to present to you.
 7 I'll start. As you know, our office does
 8 provide services in every core mission of SBA, whether
 9 it's entrepreneurial development, federal procurement,
 10 access to capital, or disaster, so those are the topics
 11 we're going to cover today. I'm going to give you the
 12 high-level view on each one of those.
 13 First is a flagship program that we have, the
 14 Veterans Business Outreach Center Program. Its purpose
 15 by statute is to deliver entrepreneurial training to
 16 service members who are transitioning from active duty
 17 to civilian life, as well as military spouses who are
 18 also eligible to attend the transition assistance
 19 program, which we call TAP.
 20 It is governed by the Department of Defense,
 21 Department of Labor, Department of Veteran Affairs,
 22 SBA, and Department of Education are also a part of the
 23 governance.
 24 Veteran business outreach centers are going to
 25 be recompeted, every one of them -- there are 20 --

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1 across the United States. And those will -- that
 2 announcement, we expect, will go out in November. I
 3 say it now so that the public's aware. And, also,
 4 we're developing the requirements for those centers
 5 over the next couple months. And we'll be getting
 6 feedback and welcome members' input on that, for
 7 certain.
 8 This is the first full year that they've been
 9 resourced to do as they were directed but did not have
 10 resources for until about 2014, and that's to deliver
 11 Boots to Business at all military installations within
 12 the United States and also those overseas, where
 13 transition assistance is provided by DOD in accordance
 14 with Title 10, Chapter 58.
 15 So they've been doing 100 percent coverage
 16 within their home location, their state, and 50 percent
 17 of the delivery elsewhere. As I said, there are only
 18 20 to cover the United States, so that means there's
 19 quite a large coverage area. We're still working --
 20 you'll hear more about it shortly -- on how do we reach
 21 service members with just about 60 people total.
 22 Ray Milano, the Director of the Veteran
 23 Business Outreach Center Program, has been conducting
 24 site visits. So the other committee that meets
 25 tomorrow, another Federal Advisory Committee Act

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1 committee, the Advisory Committee on Veteran Business
 2 Affairs, those members were invited to go see the
 3 veteran business outreach center closest to them. And
 4 I do know that Mike Phipps has done that. We look
 5 forward to hearing, during your report, any feedback
 6 that you've got on the program from your experience
 7 there, and obviously everyone will report out tomorrow
 8 as well.
 9 We don't think that we're doing everything
 10 perfectly, but we sure are trying, and we want to be
 11 accountable for the work that is getting done. So we
 12 can't wait to hear about that.
 13 On Boots to Business, there was a recompete
 14 for that program as well. We have a complex delivery
 15 model to make sure that we can be at all these
 16 installations. We are a domestic agency, and yet we're
 17 everywhere with this program. We have robust
 18 competition, and I wish I could report to you today on
 19 the decision -- it is days away -- but I can tell you
 20 that we've got fantastic offerings for service members
 21 and spouses coming our way.
 22 On the actual running of the programs, we're
 23 proud of what -- the development we've done there as
 24 well. Our team developed and entered a competition
 25 within SBA for program evaluation research, and that

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1 project will begin this year, really to see are we
 2 delivering the right product to meet the objectives
 3 that we've set for ourselves. And in that vein, the
 4 Office of Management and Budget has reviewed the long-
 5 term outcomes assessment plan for transition assistance
 6 as an entire program. SBA contributes to that. You
 7 know, what should the outcome be that we're looking for
 8 for a two-day intervention, which is how long Boots to
 9 Business is, and can we track the success of the
 10 program.
 11 So we will have a bit more on what we're able
 12 to do in that vein so far, but OMB did give us kudos,
 13 and I know that's rare, so we're grateful for it, that
 14 it was some of the best interagency collaboration seen.
 15 On Boots to Business Reboot, for those of you
 16 who are new, it's the same curriculum that we provide
 17 on military installations but brought out into
 18 communities. And it's available to veterans and
 19 Reserve and Guard members who may not have had the full
 20 transition assistance experience on a military
 21 installation. And the American Legion has been a great
 22 partner in delivering that as well.
 23 So we are doing at this time a complete
 24 bottom-up review. Should it be the same curriculum?
 25 Are there different needs for veterans of different

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1 eras? Is it a different style of learning? Are they
 2 further along on their business start and growth
 3 career? Are there certain sectors that need more
 4 attention?
 5 So we will report out in September on that,
 6 but I wanted you to know if you've got feedback, if
 7 you've participated in it or have stakeholders who
 8 have, we're looking for that feedback now.
 9 Tomorrow, an opportunity closes on grants.gov
 10 that is definitely of interest to this group, and that
 11 is the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship
 12 Training Program. We've heard from both of our FACA
 13 committees that there are barriers to service-disabled
 14 veterans competing for and winning awards in the
 15 federal procurement space.
 16 This is our effort to do some business
 17 development, specifically for veteran business owners
 18 and service-disabled business owners. The incumbent
 19 has an in-person intensive program of three days long.
 20 The eligibility for the opportunity that's out on the
 21 street right now was to provide services to companies
 22 all around the nation. We didn't specify whether it
 23 had to be in-person, online, what the modality would
 24 be, but it had to be an already existing program with
 25 outcomes that they could demonstrate, that included

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1 their business development aspects, the contracts
 2 awarded, and what types. So we are looking forward to
 3 reporting to you in September. We'll have that
 4 awarded.
 5 On a little more entrepreneurial development,
 6 we've got 30 grants coming out of our office and doing
 7 diverse things. So you heard several of them, just a
 8 few more to go. We do, by demographic, have programs
 9 for service-disabled veteran entrepreneurship training.
 10 We have four grantees. You heard about them last in
 11 March. If anybody would like more information on
 12 those, I'm happy to share that with you.
 13 The news that I do have that's new is for our
 14 women veterans, and we did make three awards in the end
 15 of March. These are the programs, the Veteran Women
 16 Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship, which is a
 17 returning awardee. Their next program is for women
 18 veterans, women service members, and women military
 19 spouses. It will be in Louisville, Kentucky in August.
 20 It's an intense program with some great outcomes.
 21 Bunker Labs is a network of military
 22 community-focused accelerators. It's almost like a
 23 franchise. They're doing a really innovative program
 24 for women veterans called EPIC. So we're trying a
 25 different mode of training to see, you know, how does

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1 that work for us and how do they do it, targeting women
 2 veterans in particular.
 3 And, finally, the San Antonio area Lift Fund.
 4 It's going to serve women veterans in Texas. Access to
 5 capital continues to be a challenge for all business
 6 owners, particularly women veterans. Although there
 7 was 300 percent growth from 2007 to 2012 in women
 8 veteran-owned small businesses, access to capital
 9 continues to hit them as a challenge. It's higher than
 10 other demographics we've seen.
 11 So we're going to test in Texas to see if we
 12 can learn some things that we would want to replicate
 13 and grow across the country. We're really happy that
 14 they're a partner of ours now.
 15 Contracting. I will stop talking soon because
 16 I'm going to turn it over to a colleague -- and to you
 17 as well -- to talk about the All Small Mentor Protégé
 18 Program. Well, I'll cover that one just now, but I
 19 wanted you to know that 33 percent of the applicants
 20 are SDVOSB. It reflects, we think, what we've heard,
 21 is that veterans want a business development program,
 22 and they perceive that this is the one that's available
 23 to them for the -- what they represent, for this
 24 population, because they're not a presumed class for
 25 8(a), for example, but this is where they think they

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1 can find the meaningful growth that they need to be
 2 competitive.
 3 And Ken Dodds will provide an update on some
 4 of the goaling -- the schooling Scorecard and also to
 5 meet one of the requirements, one of the
 6 recommendations, people want to know what the
 7 exclusions are. We want to know what the denominator
 8 is when small businesses are competing for federal
 9 spend, what are you taking out before they compete. So
 10 that's what we're going to hear about today. And I
 11 know VVA has been very interested in this, and it's
 12 always been public, but we've never walked through it
 13 with you. So we look forward to your questions.
 14 And, finally, in capital. We will have a
 15 brief from our Office of Capital Access that will talk
 16 about SBA's fee relief program for veterans, which is
 17 called SBA's Veteran Advantage.
 18 I did want to highlight some of the good
 19 things that are happening in the Interagency that
 20 perhaps some of you would report on, but I'm going to
 21 bring them forward. And if you want to say more, you
 22 can later.
 23 Department of Defense. We are working with
 24 the Military Spouse Employment and Career Opportunities
 25 Office. We have ongoing webinars with them to bring

<p style="text-align: right;">13</p> <p>1 forward entrepreneurship as an option for military 2 spouses. It's been incredibly popular. It's one of 3 their most popular topics in that employment and 4 education realm. 5 As a military spouse and also a veteran, I did 6 find it incredibly challenging to continue to move from 7 state to state every two years, so we're looking at 8 things like licensing, credentialing, how do you move 9 your business, and all the topics that any entrepreneur 10 would want to know. A lot of activity there, and we 11 think it's a fantastic partnership. 12 One of SBA's resource partners, Score, is also 13 providing one-on-one counseling. They committed to 14 joining a LinkedIn group to get the conversation going 15 in between the webinars. It's a model I think we're 16 going to try and grow and do more. 17 And Boots to Business, I've already covered 18 the interagency governance. It's just -- it's really 19 clicking along. I think we've matured. We're not 20 quite as sustained, you can always get better, but it's 21 going really well. We've trained over 60,000 service 22 members and military spouses since we launched in 23 January of 2013. 24 For the Department of Labor, we keep getting 25 tighter and tighter, so we go to each other's federal</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">15</p> <p>1 who come out with potentially a license that was good 2 in the military. They want to know how can we 3 transport that across every state, where can that be 4 done. A lot of good stuff to come. 5 And on Veteran Affairs, I'm glad that Tom 6 Leney has joined us, and Beth is on the phone. We'll 7 talk about where SBA and VA are on NDAA 17 -- 2017. 8 Did I put us ahead a year? I think -- no, I'm good, 9 okay. 10 For verification and those appeals will now be 11 able to go to the Small Business Administration Office 12 of Hearing and Appeals, or soon, and also eligibility 13 criteria for verification at Veteran Affairs and also 14 self-certification for the rest of government, that 15 alignment, where to follow. 16 Very briefly, we have veteran business 17 outreach center performance metrics. Our 18 Administrator, and all of government, wants to be more 19 effective, efficient, and also accountable. So this is 20 a bit of our accountability. We wanted you to see how 21 we're performing. We were not, as I said earlier, 22 resourced to provide training globally for transition 23 assistance until 2014. It took a year to get the right 24 measures in place for -- to understand what would be 25 the demand and what was appropriate to expect out of</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>1 committees and actually do something about it. We're 2 not just attending; we're really making a difference. 3 So I will leave most of it to you, Bill, to talk about, 4 but we, through you, were able to talk with the 5 National Association of State Work Force Agencies. 6 We're seeing more uptick in interest and participation 7 with American job centers, where small business owners 8 can find other veterans, for example, to hire. 9 So we have found a great marketplace, and we 10 think we've got the connections starting to -- we're 11 going to see outcomes. So we look forward to talking 12 with you about that. 13 Back to what I said on military spouses, 14 there's a credentialing and licensure research project 15 that is, I believe, part two on an effort that 16 education and training services -- is that correct, 17 Bill? Am I getting the name right from the Department 18 of Labor? Thank you, employment training. 19 This is being conducted by the National 20 Conference of State Legislatures, as well as the 21 National Governors Association. I met with NCSL a 22 couple times in the last month and intend to follow up. 23 We don't need to wait for the end of the research. 24 There's a lot that can be done now, and we hope to make 25 a meaningful difference in that for military members</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">16</p> <p>1 such a small program. 2 So we have taken away some of the other goals 3 that were put upon VBOCs and really aligned them with 4 statute, and that is they've got to be on those bases, 5 working with service members and military spouses. So 6 you will see numbers coming down on counseling, which 7 is that one-on-one time with a business owner, and 8 you'll see the numbers going up in training because 9 that's how we talk about any class where it's more than 10 just one person, one-on-one. And that training is 11 almost fully Boots to Business. 12 They do amazing things. You wonder, well -- 13 and remember, I said it's about 60 people total when 14 you look at these numbers on how they're reaching. And 15 when you look at that and the amount of money that we 16 spend, which is just over \$5 and half million, I think 17 we've got incredible reach and value to business 18 owners. And there are also going to be outcomes for 19 the work that they're doing. 20 But how do we do this with so few resources? 21 SBA does also -- my office -- grant to the other 22 resource partners of SBA -- Score mentors, women's 23 business centers and small business development centers 24 -- who are also on these military installations. This 25 is the way that new clients are going to find out that</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">17</p> <p>1 SBA even exists and that there's something for them to 2 help them get their business launched. So even though 3 it's complicated, we're thrilled we have that diversity 4 of delivery out there in the field. 5 MR. LENEY: All the VBOCs are going to be on 6 military installations? 7 MS. CARSON: Instruction takes place on 8 military installations. So I believe that Department 9 of Veteran Affairs has contractors providing their 10 portion of transition assistance; we do not. That was 11 Tom Lenev from Veteran Affairs. 12 Moving on to Boots to Business quarterly 13 performance, it's tough to read the chart if you are 14 sitting out here with us, but maybe you have it in 15 front of you. So the dark blue line, the largest of 16 them, is the in-person instruction that happens on 17 military installations. The darker line that is not 18 orange is the availability of the course online, which 19 we use the Joint Knowledge online platform, which is a 20 DOD product. 21 And that's for folks that can't reach it in- 22 person -- they're remote, they're on a ship, that's how 23 we're getting to them. That's not the preferred 24 method. We want to get them in person, but that is 25 available, and we're pleased that it's being used.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p> <p>1 has been executed twice. And these are some of the 2 results. So, again, there are caveats when you have a 3 survey. You know, it's not the same as being able to 4 pull from a data set like IRS and be -- so we've got to 5 know that's the best that we can do, but I did want to 6 show you that we have a decent business start rate and 7 sustainment thus far. Again, we haven't been providing 8 this training until -- it wasn't funded until 2014 in 9 the middle of the year, but 45 percent of the follow- 10 on, the folks who took the two-day plus a follow-on, 11 they started the business and are still in business. 12 And we have a higher appetite even for those 13 who only took the two-day introduction. They may have 14 gone somewhere else to get more instruction, but from 15 what they responded to us, 37 percent of them have 16 started a business and stayed in business. 17 We know from Census -- well, I don't want to 18 cite the source wrong, and I've got Joe Sobota from 19 Advocacy here, so I'll just keep it tight. You correct 20 me if I'm wrong, Joe, but veterans are more persistent. 21 Once in business, they stay in business. They also 22 happen to start later, generally. He's going to tell 23 us about what, if anything, is different that Census is 24 telling us about veteran business owners. 25 That was a really quick overview of what our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">18</p> <p>1 And, finally, the orange is Reboot. That's 2 the veterans that I mentioned, National Guard and 3 Reserve, that we're reaching out in the community for 4 the same curriculum. 5 Finally, the last thing I will talk about on 6 Boots to Business, I believe -- nope, I've got one more 7 after this -- is just showing you again the complexity 8 and the great diversity of who's providing this 9 instruction in the United States. We do have a grantee 10 who performs overseas in the Asian and European 11 theaters and reaches total, with 150-ish that we 12 provide service to in the U.S., plus another 35 to 40 13 overseas. We're doing great stuff. And you'll see 14 that year over year, the veteran business outreach 15 center portion of that instruction is increasing, which 16 is exactly what we intend. 17 Finally, a bit on outcomes. For my federal 18 government employees, you know that it's hard to get at 19 outcome data because it's really burdensome, as it 20 should be, for us to go ask citizens about what they're 21 doing. We must not be a burden to them, while we're 22 also trying to prove that we know that we're asking the 23 right questions so that we can get at those results. 24 So the way that we have done that is to create 25 a survey that was approved by OMB two years ago. It</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20</p> <p>1 office has been doing. Are there any questions at this 2 time on this aspect? 3 (No response.) 4 MS. CARSON: Okay, we're going to pause for 5 just a moment for some technical updates. 6 DR. GALVIN: Barb? Jim Galvin from Department 7 of Defense. I just would add, so, to the foundation 8 that you just described here, when they are up and 9 running and/or during maturing their business, there 10 are procurement technical assistant centers that DOD 11 has around the country as well, procurement readiness 12 centers, things like that that SBA offers. 13 MS. CARSON: Absolutely true, and we try to 14 incorporate PTACs into the work that we do when we go 15 out to talk about federal procurement with veterans. 16 Thanks for bringing that up. 17 For those of you following an agenda, we are 18 going to move forward a couple. I talked too fast this 19 time. So I welcome to the table Joe Sobota from SBA's 20 Office of Advocacy to share his presentation on the 21 Census Bureau data on veteran-owned businesses. 22 MR. SOBOTA: Am I on? All right. Thank you, 23 Barb. It's a pleasure to be back before this group 24 again. I've had the opportunity to speak before you 25 several times before, and some of the information that</p>

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1 I'll talk about here today -- and I will be brief --
 2 some of you have heard before, but Barb asked me to
 3 come back because we do have some new information and
 4 we have some new faces too.
 5 So my office, amongst its many other duties,
 6 also has a mandate to develop economic research on
 7 veterans, veteran-owned businesses, and the role that
 8 they play in our economy. It's part of our economic
 9 research function generally. And we have a specific
 10 legislative mandate, Census Public Law 106-50, and
 11 since that time we've had an ongoing economic research
 12 program in this area, and we work closely with other
 13 agencies, and especially the Census Bureau and the
 14 Department of Commerce to develop information.
 15 They actually provide our best source of
 16 information on veteran-owned businesses. And once
 17 every five years, they do a very important survey
 18 called the Survey of Business Owners. And this is also
 19 the source of information for women-owned businesses
 20 and minority-owned businesses, businesses of all kinds
 21 really, but we're able to break out various demographic
 22 groups, including veterans. And, so, that's the gold
 23 standard for information on veterans in business.
 24 Unfortunately, they only do it once every five
 25 years, and because of the way that the data is

22

1 collected, there's a significant lag time. And, so,
 2 the data we get is kind of old, and the most current
 3 data that we have currently is from 2012. They only do
 4 it every five years for data years ending in 2 and 7,
 5 and this happens to be one of those years.
 6 But the way they construct their sampling
 7 frames is -- and it's a great way to do it -- they use
 8 IRS business tax filings, and so we know -- I can be
 9 reasonably sure that nobody's going to file a business
 10 tax return that doesn't actually have some business
 11 income. So the trouble is, though, that businesses
 12 don't file those until next year and a lot of them
 13 until October. So basically we don't have those
 14 sampling frames ready to put together until this time
 15 around. It will be late 2018 and '19 before they get
 16 their surveys out on the street. And then we get an
 17 enormous amount of data back that takes time to process
 18 it.
 19 So if everything is on track and we don't have
 20 any unexpected disruptions because of resource
 21 questions and the Congress, of course, is always
 22 debating about how to deploy resources, and if we stay
 23 on a steady track, we will get the '17 information,
 24 probably at the very end of 2020. So this is the best
 25 that we have. And, now, there is an exception to that,

23

1 and if I have any time, I'm going to tell you about
 2 that at the end. But let's go to the slides. I just
 3 made a few slides.
 4 Oh, one other thing. The main thing that I
 5 wanted to do here today really is not to bury you in
 6 data and in slides. I wanted to give the members of
 7 the Task Force this new data product, this hard copy
 8 data product. And like most agencies, we don't publish
 9 a lot of hard copies of stuff anymore, but we did
 10 publish a few of these. And there's more than 100
 11 pages of data on veteran-owned businesses in there, and
 12 it's online, and I'll give you the URL for the record.
 13 It will be on the last slide.
 14 But there's a huge amount of data in there,
 15 and one of the reasons we put that publication together
 16 is the Census Bureau had so much that it's really,
 17 really hard for them to try to pick and choose what
 18 they would publish in a book form. I mean, there's
 19 just no end to it. There's any number of combinations
 20 you could do to extract data. This is kind of focused
 21 on veterans only, and I could have made a book five
 22 times this thick easily. And, so, it's a huge
 23 challenge, and they just don't do it.
 24 You get to go find your own data by forming
 25 queries in their American Factfinder Utility online,

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1 which is a great tool, but it's a little difficult for
 2 some people who are not familiar with it to just go
 3 look something up. You have to learn how to use the
 4 utility. Once you do, it's not very hard. But this
 5 shortcut, my little book here, my 100-page book, means
 6 you can just look something up, and also there is some
 7 background information, statistical limitations and so
 8 on, that they're important whenever you're dealing with
 9 survey information.
 10 But I just have a few quick slides here, and
 11 we'll go through these. I already hit on some of these
 12 here, that once every five years the 2012 product,
 13 we're about 1.75 million folks that received survey
 14 instruments in one of two forms. And anybody that --
 15 these samples are carefully constructed to be
 16 statistically proper. Business tax filers of any type,
 17 whether it be individual proprietorships, partnerships,
 18 corporations, but they have to have more than \$1,000 in
 19 income, which is a fairly low threshold obviously.
 20 There are a few categories of folks that are
 21 excluded, including agricultural production. Most
 22 agricultural businesses that are not actually producing
 23 food or fiber are included. So if you were selling
 24 feed or seed or agricultural implements of those kind
 25 of things to the farmers, you would be in, but if you

25

1 are a farmer yourself, you're not in. There are a few
2 other exceptions as well.

3 A veteran-owned firm is one that has 51
4 percent equity in the business. I suppose this might
5 be a good time to mention that all of the data in the
6 report that we just put out involves veteran-owned
7 businesses, but there are also about another quarter
8 more than that -- 24 percent I believe -- 23 percent --
9 more that are equally owned by veterans and
10 nonveterans. So, I mean, there are actually more
11 businesses out there in which veterans are involved
12 than these statistics would reflect.

13 We know that the veteran-owned business is
14 more useful because of the contracting and procurement
15 uses required 51 percent or more. Next slide, please.

16 The top-level numbers, we have about 2.5
17 million non-FAR firms. In 2012, that's a little over 9
18 percent of all -- of all U.S. businesses. They
19 employed 5 million people with payroll of 195 billion.
20 We see 1.4 trillion in sales, which is about 3.4
21 percent of the total.

22 One of the reasons the sales percentages are
23 less than the number percentages is because -- and this
24 is true of all kinds of businesses. It would be true
25 of women-owned business or other businesses, is that a

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1 lot of the really bulky sales are at the top of large
2 corporations. And they kind of offset the percentages
3 in a way that the numbered do not. And, so, when you
4 have large publicly traded corporations with huge
5 sales, that kind of skews that percentage number. Next
6 slide.

7 I do have some pretty pictures in here
8 someplace. Yeah, employers. You can see that there
9 were about 17.5 percent of all the businesses were
10 employers. And they represent about five -- they
11 represent -- by definition, all of the employment and
12 the payroll, about 195 billion.

13 The 91.9 percent of all the receipts -- or 92
14 percent of all the receipts came from that 17.5
15 percent, though. So at the end, I'll get back to that
16 number. It's not surprising that there are a lot more
17 nonemployers who are just sole proprietorships, set
18 part-time businesses off and maybe start up. There are
19 a lot of those -- 82.5 percent of all those business
20 tax filers were not employers. But they only account
21 for about 8 percent of the revenue. So the employers
22 are very important here.

23 The average sales of the employer is about
24 \$2.4 million, but obviously there's a huge range there,
25 and that average number really probably doesn't have a

27

1 lot of meaning because of the range. Next slide.

2 Here's the other side of the coin, the
3 nonemployers. So we have over 2 million nonemployers,
4 and 82.5 percent that I already mentioned, the -- that
5 the average there was 44,300, but, again, there would
6 be a big range there. Next slide.

7 Here's a kind of an interesting -- I promised
8 some pictures, so I had to have something with color in
9 it, yeah. It's a little difficult to read those
10 numbers, but they are in the book, in the slide show
11 handout that we have on the table back there. The
12 darker colors are where the most veteran-owned
13 businesses are; and the lighter, of course, were the
14 least. And they are kind of where you'd expect them to
15 be in larger states, and why don't we go to the next
16 slide.

17 But this is really more interesting, I think.
18 In order to control for the population size of states,
19 this is the percentage of veteran-owned businesses in
20 each state, again, depicted by color in the same way as
21 the last chart. And controlling for the population
22 shows a whole different group of folks there. As one
23 of the earlier slides pointed out, there were 9.1
24 percent of all businesses in the U.S. were owned by
25 veterans, but there's a big range among the states.

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1 So I think the top one was South Carolina,
2 which is 13.4 percent, and that's considerably more.
3 And then at the low end of the scale were places like
4 New York and California, and they were down in the 6
5 percent or the 6.5 percent range.

6 So while New York and California were way high
7 because of their numbers, they actually percentage-wise
8 are in the low end. And there's -- in our new report
9 here there is a complete listing for all states, and in
10 the order in which they appear.

11 So you can look up -- I had to testify at a
12 hearing some years ago, and that's the first question
13 they asked, the members -- Mr. Boozman, he was not a
14 senator yet, he was on the House committee at the time,
15 and he wanted to know what was going on in Arkansas.
16 And at that time, we were dealing with 2007 data, and I
17 didn't have an answer for him. And, so, anyhow, we've
18 worked with the Census over the years to improve the
19 product and get new information.

20 And as a matter of fact, I think the next
21 slide -- could you go to the next slide? No, this is
22 distribution by type of industry. As you can see,
23 veteran-owned businesses are throughout all different
24 industry groups. The largest two -- and this has
25 remained pretty constant over the years -- the

29

1 professional/technical services group and construction.
 2 Together, those two are not quite a third of all
 3 veteran-owned businesses. And that was pretty much the
 4 same as it was five years earlier.
 5 Those are very large groups for veterans, but
 6 they appear in all the other groups as well. And,
 7 indeed, there are -- in the data product, there are
 8 comparisons between veteran-owned businesses and all
 9 businesses so you can see where the -- what industries
 10 the veterans are stronger in.
 11 Next. Okay, here's a little bit about owners.
 12 One of the -- veteran-owned businesses and owners are
 13 very similar to most businesses except in two major
 14 demographic respects. And one is age; and the other is
 15 gender. And it goes along with the underlying
 16 populations of veterans. Veterans are older, and
 17 they're predominantly male, although that's changing.
 18 And, so, you can just see by that one level -- that one
 19 number right there, 74 percent, are 55 or older. And
 20 it's like 65 -- if you go over 65 -- well, I have that
 21 number in my head, but I won't make it up. It's a lot
 22 higher than you'd think. And 41.1 percent for all
 23 owners, so there's a huge difference.
 24 You can see the numbers involved for various
 25 demographic groups. One of the interesting things and

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1 not portrayed on this chart but Barb and I know about
 2 this from talking about this, is there's a huge
 3 increase in virtually all of these groups except for
 4 white males. All of the other groups -- African
 5 American, Hispanic -- all of them went up tremendously
 6 in the last five years, and especially women-owned
 7 veterans. They went way up. They're like four times
 8 higher than they were only five years ago. So that's
 9 really remarkable.
 10 Now, for employers, the businesses, the
 11 primary income source for not quite two-thirds of the
 12 owners and only about one-third of the nonemployers so
 13 you can see a lot of those nonemployer numbers are
 14 part-time or might be something they're doing in
 15 retirement, they have a pension going or whatever, and
 16 they're doing something on the side but don't rely on
 17 the business for their full-time income. The
 18 employers, on the other hand, are definitely -- this is
 19 their source of income. Next.
 20 Here's the actual question. I'm getting
 21 towards the end here, and I want to end with the next
 22 slide, and this is important to the next slide. The
 23 survey instrument itself, this is taken directly from
 24 it, was revised the last time around in 2012, and my
 25 office worked very closely with Census to do this.

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1 And we had a whole series of roundtables --
 2 some folks in the room here, I know -- Joe? You're
 3 back there -- actually participated in these
 4 roundtables. And we had people from all kinds of
 5 Government agencies and Hill committees, CBO, RAND
 6 Corporation, IDEA. We had quite a lot of people talk
 7 about this and the subject -- it was very important to
 8 a lot of people at that time to somehow capture better
 9 information on people that were in the Reserves and the
 10 National Guard.
 11 And I had the honor of serving, oh, much -- it
 12 must be more than ten years ago on one of these NDAA
 13 interagency groups to look at the effect of the
 14 deployments, heavy deployments, on Guard and Reservists
 15 after the Second Gulf War. And we worked very closely
 16 with our friends in other agencies, but especially DOD
 17 was leading that effort and their office of -- the
 18 Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs to try to gauge
 19 the effects all these extended deployments were having.
 20 And we actually wrote a couple of reports on
 21 that that were transmitted from the Secretary of
 22 Defense to the Congress. But we found that we have
 23 very, very little data on Reservists and National Guard
 24 people in business. And, so, we worked with Census to
 25 try to capture more data, and this question was the

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1 result. And it took a lot of talking to get this
 2 boiled down to here. And, of course, it had to undergo
 3 cognitive testing. OMB had to approve it. And anybody
 4 that's ever gone through that process of getting a
 5 survey approved, you know how much fun that is, and --
 6 but we got it done, and that's what it looks like.
 7 And the results -- why don't we go to the next
 8 slide. I know this is a bit small, but this is new
 9 information -- I mean, new for this survey. It's about
 10 two years old now. And for the very first time, we
 11 actually have a little bit of data on Reservists. Now,
 12 without getting too much in the weeds on statistics
 13 here, I wouldn't pay a lot of attention to the numbers
 14 so much. I'd pay more attention to the percentages or
 15 the distribution because numbers are based on
 16 respondent firms only, and the respondent firms
 17 actually were about 60 percent what we know were the
 18 total.
 19 So the actual numbers -- if the
 20 characteristics of nonrespondents were the same as
 21 respondents, they'd be about two-thirds again more
 22 because we only had about 60 percent respondents. But
 23 for statistical reasons, the Census Bureau will not
 24 make that extrapolation. So we're not so interested in
 25 those numbers there, although you could look at them as

<p style="text-align: right;">33</p> <p>1 minimums. We could say that we have at least that 2 many.</p> <p>3 But what's interesting are those percentages: 4 7.3 percent service-connected disabilities. But we 5 have about 5 percent -- 4.9 percent of all of those 6 folks were from post-911 service, and what would have 7 really been useful to us when we were looking for these 8 kinds of answers in the prior project was the knowledge 9 that about 3.3 percent of folks that were -- that 10 answered yes to this veterans question were active -- 11 excuse me, I won't use that word "active" -- were 12 members of the National Guard or Reserve in the survey 13 year. So that's -- that's pretty interesting.</p> <p>14 And we didn't know what we were going to get 15 about active duty because if you're active duty in the 16 survey year, a lot of people would be completely out of 17 the -- you wouldn't be running a business while you're 18 at active duty at the same time, we thought. But as it 19 turns out, about a little less than 1 percent were, and 20 some of those folks are, of course, entering or leaving 21 the service.</p> <p>22 But that's pretty interesting information 23 to -- and that's new with this iteration. And I can't 24 tell you the question will be precisely the same for 25 '17. They're still working on that, but hopefully</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">35</p> <p>1 no, you know, scientific way to tell you what that is. 2 I'm sure there are any number of program offices around 3 the Government that would like to take credit for that 4 and say our efforts were responsible for all the 5 success, but it's real. I can't tell you whether it 6 will continue or not, but it's just hard in that to say 7 -- there is one other factor. Because of the change in 8 the question between 2007 and 2012, we are probably now 9 including more Reservists than we ever did before, and 10 there may be a higher percentage of those groups in the 11 Reserves that are now turning up there. That might be 12 one, but I'm just speculating. I don't have any way to 13 verify that.</p> <p>14 MS. CARSON: And I have -- this is Barb Carson 15 from SBA. Just three comments on some of the data that 16 we saw today that I've shared with Joe but wanted to 17 mention to you. One is the post-911 business start 18 rate of 4.5 percent, correct? It's a lot lower than 19 previous generations of veterans. And we're -- we 20 really want to see what more we could be doing to make 21 what we call the next great generation of veteran 22 entrepreneurs. That's some of our work here.</p> <p>23 We are seeing indicators in Boots to Business. 24 About 10 percent of the transition assistance program 25 participants choose to take our course at that time, so</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">34</p> <p>1 we'll have some comparative information between '17 and 2 '12.</p> <p>3 So last slide. All this is is the contact 4 information. You can get a lot more information or 5 build your own queries at the Census site, and then you 6 can get a copy of our new data product at the Advocacy 7 site there.</p> <p>8 MS. CARSON: Joe, thank you so much for all 9 the time that you put into this report and to helping 10 us do our work. It's been incredible.</p> <p>11 MR. SOBOTA: Did I take too long?</p> <p>12 MS. CARSON: You took just the right amount of 13 time. We may have used up most of the time I would 14 have left for questions. However, are there any -- 15 maybe one or two questions we could take for Joe at 16 this time?</p> <p>17 MR. SOBOTA: Send me anything that you would 18 by email and I'll be happy to try to answer them.</p> <p>19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is there a reason for the -- 20 do you know the reason for the uptick in the African 21 American and Hispanic?</p> <p>22 MS. CARSON: The question was is there -- can 23 you tell the reason for the uptick in some demographics 24 such as African American.</p> <p>25 MR. SOBOTA: I would be speculating. I have</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">36</p> <p>1 we believe that we've got a new gateway to getting them 2 connected with the resources that would help them be 3 more successful.</p> <p>4 On age, it's important. These Vietnam 5 veterans or Vietnam era veterans are still incredibly 6 vibrant business owners right now, and I do not want 7 the message ever to be that we're ready for you to move 8 to the next adventure, but I do want to pay attention 9 to what we can be doing as an agency, where 10 appropriate, especially in SDV companies that have 11 procurement activities going on. They don't want to 12 lose their status or that work, and there is something 13 that we can be doing when business owners look to sell, 14 both on main street businesses and in federal 15 procurement. So that's something perhaps for the 16 committee's consideration to take up in the near 17 future.</p> <p>18 And women vets. Yes, we're increasing, and 19 there are a lot more to be done. So thank you so much, 20 Joe.</p> <p>21 Are there any questions from those who are 22 participating from the phone before we move on to our 23 next presentation?</p> <p>24 (No response.)</p> <p>25 MS. CARSON: Okay, thanks again, Mr. Sobota.</p>

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1 I'm going now to my colleague, Mr. Ken Dodds,
2 from the Office of Government Contracting and Business
3 Development, with updates that I want to make sure I
4 get. We're all interested in the Scorecard. Many of
5 you have seen it. That is a great body of his work,
6 but there is another recommendation of this committee
7 that will be addressed by Ken today, and that is about
8 exclusions: How are exclusions determined?

9 MR. DODDS: Yes. Thank you.

10 MS. CARSON: So I turn it over to you, sir.

11 MR. DODDS: Thank you very much. I was hoping
12 that we would have the Scorecard, but you've probably
13 seen it. We just issued the FY 16 Scorecard and at the
14 end of May, where the Government, you know, did pretty
15 well. We met the small business goal for the fourth
16 year in a row, and we actually had the highest ever
17 service-disabled veteran-owned small business
18 percentage at 3.98.

19 And what was interesting about that is that
20 all of categories went down, except for SDVO, and we
21 kind of expected the categories to go down because FY
22 16, I think, was the first year where we included
23 overseas contracts, except for some exclusions for DOD,
24 in the goaling base. And, so, you know, small business
25 does do some work overseas but not very high

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1 percentages. And, so, we expected things to go down
2 somewhat, and they did go down a little bit in each
3 category except SDVO.

4 So I'll go over the methodology for the
5 Scorecard for FY 16 quickly. This is the last year
6 we're actually -- that was the last year we actually
7 used this. The Scorecard's changing in the year we're
8 actually in. Okay? Let's go to the first slide there.

9 So the way we graded agencies in FY 16 was 80
10 percent of their grade was prime contracting; 10
11 percent was subcontracting; and 10 percent was a peer
12 review of the OSDBU of how the other OSDBUs were doing
13 on seven factors that we evaluated. Let's go to the
14 next slide.

15 And, so, within that, let's say, 80 percent,
16 for example, of the prime contracting of their grade,
17 60 percent of the 80 percent was small business. And
18 then 10 percent was SDV; 10 percent was women-owned; 10
19 percent was SDVO; 10 percent was HubZone.

20 Same breakdown when you look at
21 subcontracting. It's 10 percent of the agencies that
22 were all grade, but small business was 60 percent of
23 that 10 percent, and then the other categories were 10
24 percent each. And then the success factors are there.
25 I don't think we -- so the slides you can look at. I'm

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1 not going to go over them. You know, it's kind of a
2 complicated -- we tried to do this all based on math.
3 It's all percentages, and we also -- we do allow --
4 agencies did get, you know, extra credit. So if they
5 exceed a goal, we don't just stop there. They may get
6 extra credit in that particular category towards their
7 goal.

8 What I will say before we go on to the next
9 deck is that for the year we're in right now, by the
10 NDAA of '16, I believe, the percentages are going to go
11 down for prime contracting. Instead of being 80
12 percent of an agency's grade, the percentage is going
13 to be 50 percent. So prime will be 50 percent of their
14 overall grade under the new Scorecard. And then
15 subcontracting will go up from 10 percent to 20 percent
16 under that new Scorecard.

17 Another -- I think it's 20 percent will be a
18 peer review of all the duties that an OSDBU has to
19 complete under Section 15(k) of the Small Business Act.
20 Whereas before we had seven factors we looked at, I
21 think it's almost 20 under Section 15(k) that they'll
22 be evaluated on.

23 And then the last 10 percent of the Scorecard
24 will be the -- basically a comparison of the number of
25 contracts awarded to small businesses in one fiscal

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1 year to a prior fiscal year. So that was a change that
2 they required, and so that's something we're going to
3 be implementing right now.

4 If we can go to the next deck. Yeah, do you
5 have any questions about FY 16 Scorecard before I move
6 on?

7 MR. PHIPPS: Ken, this is Michael Phipps. Can
8 you explain a little bit about the percentages, that 80
9 percent of the Scorecard grade and why it went down --
10 why it's going down to 50 and the subcontracting is
11 going up to 20?

12 MR. DODDS: Yeah. The way we had it set up
13 before was usually the administration can decide
14 whatever they want the Scorecard to be. If you
15 remember back to the Bush years, they had like a red
16 light, green light, yellow light type of scheme. When
17 the Obama Administration came in, they changed it to an
18 A, B, C, D, F type of scorecard. And, you know, I
19 wasn't around for the decision of why 80 percent versus
20 whatever, but that was how they kind of ranked it.

21 I think, you know, prime contracting does get
22 a lot of attention from the press and the Hill, so
23 maybe that's why it was so important. In the NDAA of
24 '16, they legislated what the Scorecard is supposed to
25 be, and they said prime contracting can only be 50

41	<p>1 percent. That's the highest it can be. So by 2 definition, that's going down.</p> <p>3 And they said the other factors are going to 4 be -- they didn't give us a percentage, but they said 5 subcontracting is a comparison of number of awards in 6 one fiscal year to a prior fiscal year. They asked us 7 to compare the number of subcontracts awarded by NAICS 8 code, but we can't really do that, so we're not able to 9 do that. And then the other -- then they said other 10 factors as necessary.</p> <p>11 And in another section, they basically said 12 the OSDBU -- the OSDBUs need to do, you know, like a 13 peer review of the other OSDBUs. So since we were 14 already doing that with these seven success factors, we 15 just added in all the factors and under 15(k). So 16 that's how we ended up with those percentages. And 17 they may change because, you know, these decisions were 18 made -- they won't change for this fiscal year. I got 19 Jim's attention. Whatever we said is for '17 is for 20 '17, but for '18, we could -- you know, who knows what 21 -- no decisions have been made on that yet.</p> <p>22 All right. Let's go to the exclusions, which 23 I can hardly read. Basically, let's see if I can try 24 to talk about this. So certain things are right now 25 excluded from our report on how the Government did.</p>	43	<p>1 '16, we included contracts performed outside the U.S. 2 except for DOD contingency operations and status of 3 force agreements acquisitions.</p> <p>4 And then I think we note here that based on 5 that, in the NDAA of '17, Congress said we want you to 6 exclude, you know, overseas contracts for DOD, for 7 contingency, humanitarian, status of forces agreements, 8 foreign military sales, and acquisitions awarded and 9 performed outside the U.S. So basically starting in 10 '18 for DOD, the only, you know, overseas procurement 11 that will be included is if it's an order here 12 performed outside the U.S. and not in connection with a 13 contingency, humanitarian operation, status of force 14 agreements, or foreign military sales. So I believe 15 that the vast majority of DOD overseas will be 16 excluded, but DOD could answer better to what they 17 think that that impact of that will be.</p> <p>18 If you go to the fourth page -- oh.</p> <p>19 DR. GALVIN: Ken, this is Jim Galvin. I could 20 jump in briefly. Just we have looked into that at DOD, 21 and it turns out there are a substantial number of 22 contracts awarded here in the United States and 23 performed overseas. It's above 50 percent, actually. 24 So the overseas awarded and excluded like a contract 25 awarded in Japan and performed in Japan or somewhere in</p>
42	<p>1 One of those is Javits-Wagner-O'Day or AbilityOne and 2 Federal Prison Industries exclusions because these are 3 mandatory sources that small business has no 4 opportunity to participate in, and so these exclusions 5 go back well before, you know, my tenure at SBA. So 6 this has been the case through the Bush years, through 7 the Obama years, and so forth. So that's the first 8 exclusion listed here.</p> <p>9 And this kind of -- what I've given you here 10 kind of mirrors what's at the end of the small business 11 goaling report and FPDS. That's the first exclusion, 12 and we have all the -- we list all the DUNS numbers of 13 the entities that are considered UNICOR and so forth.</p> <p>14 If you go to the third page, there's an 15 exclusion for the American Institute in Taiwan. I'm 16 still trying to figure out why we have this. It's a 17 very small amount of money. I think it was put in 18 there because at the time we were excluding overseas 19 contracting. And, so, this was a -- it was created 20 because we couldn't have an embassy in Taiwan 21 basically. We have an institute there. And, so, it 22 continues as an exclusion as a very small amount of 23 money.</p> <p>24 Then we had -- you know, previously, we had 25 excluded all contracts performed outside the U.S. In</p>	44	<p>1 the Pacific would be excluded. We do have a number 2 that are awarded like in Philadelphia and then 3 performed overseas. So there is still a market 4 opportunity there.</p> <p>5 MR. DODDS: Okay, yeah, I'd like to see that 6 because -- are you talking about -- you think it's 50 7 percent of the OCONUS not included in like foreign 8 military sales?</p> <p>9 DR. GALVIN: Yes.</p> <p>10 MR. DODDS: Okay.</p> <p>11 DR. GALVIN: Taking out the other four 12 standard exclusions that we have.</p> <p>13 MR. DODDS: Okay.</p> <p>14 DR. GALVIN: Just the -- quite a bit that's 15 still awarded domestically.</p> <p>16 MR. DODDS: Okay, that's great to know. 17 That's good. I'll definitely like to see that. That 18 will help us when we're trying to negotiate our goals 19 this summer.</p> <p>20 DR. GALVIN: Yeah, I guess I just showed my 21 hand a little.</p> <p>22 MR. DODDS: But that's very helpful. We can 23 get started and make a lot more progress, I think.</p> <p>24 DR. GALVIN: I'm trying to be transparent.</p> <p>25 MR. DODDS: Thank you. If you go to 4, page</p>

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1 4, there are a lot of acquisitions that are done where
2 the funding comes from a foreign government, not just
3 DOD, but other agencies, and they are excluded because
4 it's not the Federal Government spending money; it's a
5 foreign entity borrowing things.

6 Page 5 is a little bit -- this does mirror
7 what the exclusion says, but it's a little misleading,
8 and I'd like to hopefully rewrite it at some point.
9 When I think of an exclusion, I think of something
10 that's actually reported in FPDS and we take it out
11 when we give you your Scorecard. That, to me, is an
12 exclusion.

13 What's listed here, in some cases, are things
14 that just aren't reported in FPDS. So I have no -- we
15 don't have any idea what the numbers are, so we're not
16 really excluding it; it's not reported. And sometimes
17 it's reported for, you know, all kinds of different
18 reasons. One of them would be like the CIA, they don't
19 report on their contracting because it's of national
20 security. Some of these other agencies or entities
21 aren't -- aren't in the Executive Branch, they're not
22 covered by the FAR or the Small Business Act. So it's
23 not that we're excluding them; they just don't report.

24 What is reported, the agencies we are
25 excluding, doesn't really make sense because small

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1 business does really well with them. They're small
2 amounts of money, and the small business does well, so
3 it actually doesn't help us to exclude them. So I'm
4 hoping to update this, but this is actually what's been
5 there for a long time in terms of what we call
6 exclusions. And, again, these are usually very -- you
7 know, some of these are small amounts of money.

8 On page 6, we talk about resale, and that
9 means -- I believe that's where DOD is buying something
10 to sell in the commissary, and so we don't consider
11 that DOD buying it. They're buying it to sell it.
12 It's a very, very small amount of money.

13 Leases we do include now to the extent
14 they're reported in FPDS, but most leases are not.
15 Utilities we continue to exclude because they're
16 thought of as not having small business opportunity.
17 I'm not so sure about that. I think there have been
18 some -- there seems to be some situations where a small
19 business does have contracts with DOD, for example, to
20 try to provide electricity and things like that. So
21 that's one we'd -- I'd like to take a look at, but it
22 still remains.

23 Tri-Care is excluded. And then on page 7, I
24 think that's it. These are all kind of related to Tri-
25 Care. And then -- sorry, page 8, we did add an

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1 exclusion for the Department of Education because by
2 law they are not allowed to use a for-profit company to
3 do certain loan-related collection things. And, so, in
4 order to be a small business, you have to be for-
5 profit, so we did exclude this. It's a small amount of
6 money in the grand scheme of things, but I guess it's a
7 large amount for education. So those are excluded.

8 I think that's all the exclusions. So do you
9 have any questions about what I just ran through real
10 quick?

11 MR. PHIPPS: Hi, Ken. Michael Phipps. Is
12 there a way we could see the amounts of money we're
13 talking about here, because you keep -- you keep
14 referencing it's, you know, some are large amounts,
15 some are not? It would be great to see an amount lined
16 up with each of these exclusions so we can dig further
17 down into the data.

18 MR. DODDS: Yeah, I'll have to think about
19 that because, I mean, this is a publicly available
20 database, so if you have the right people, you could
21 figure it out. You know, anyone could figure it out
22 and get it because it's all there. But we don't
23 usually publicize the exclusions as a separate -- as a
24 separate thing.

25 MR. PHIPPS: Is there a reason for that? Is

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1 it going to be -- is it to what the reaction might be
2 when they see --

3 MR. DODDS: Well, it's just -- I mean, we
4 report on the Scorecard, and we do that based on what
5 we've decided is the eligible pool. I will note that
6 by law GSA is supposed to do a report without any
7 exclusions. So, by statute, they're the ones that are
8 supposed to do that, not necessarily SBA.

9 MR. CARSON: Do you want to comment on that
10 one now or perhaps at our next meeting? We could
11 follow up. This is -- for those following at home, we
12 had a recommendation for this committee to talk about
13 exclusions. That was Recommendation 1.3. So could we
14 come back to GSA for a followup on that topic, or go
15 ahead if you'd like to say something now. Just
16 identify yourself.

17 MR. ARRIETA: So I think our OSDBU staff said
18 they would save it for the next meeting.

19 MR. GAVINO: This is Amando Gavino, GSA. We
20 actually have a brand new executive representing small
21 business in GSA. His name is Charles Manger. He's
22 behind me right now. We decided that we're going to
23 address that in the next meeting.

24 MS. CARSON: I appreciate that. Thank you
25 very much.

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1 Any other questions before we move on to
2 capital access?

3 MR. KLINGELHOFER: Actually, this is Victor
4 Klingelhofer. I have one comment and I also would like
5 to support Michael's question. He took the words out
6 of my mouth, that it's great knowing the classes of
7 things, but unless we have some concept of the dollar
8 amounts, it really makes it not as useful as we had
9 hoped.

10 And my one comment is that there was a Court
11 of Federal Claims bid protest decision that came out
12 about a week ago, specifically on the Javits-Wagner-
13 O'Day program, which said that for VA contracting, the
14 rule of two will take precedence over the Javits-
15 Wagner-O'Day program, and I imagine the same philosophy
16 would also govern the prison industries and somehow
17 take that into consideration. And I don't know if it's
18 going to be appealed or not. I haven't heard anything
19 on it.

20 MR. DODDS: We did see that decision, and we
21 have -- that issue has been litigated as far as the
22 Small Business Act, and we were not successful in the
23 past. But if and when -- if that ever were to happen,
24 then, yes, that would be a good reason to get rid of
25 that exclusion if small business were to take

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1 precedence over that mandatory source. But until that
2 happens, you know, the decision can be made at any time
3 to take exclusions out or put more in. I mean, that's
4 something we can do -- we do sometimes year by year.

5 MR. KLINGELHOFER: Yes, I recognize that
6 that's only dealing with the VA because of the specific
7 language, mandatory language in the --

8 MR. DODDS: I mean, a small business could --
9 just like with Kingdomware they could take that
10 decision and try to use that and try to relitigate it.
11 Just because it was decided in the past doesn't mean it
12 won't come up again.

13 MR. KLINGELHOFER: I highly recommend that.
14 Take it up with the Office of Advocacy, probably.

15 MR. JENKINS: Hello, Ken?

16 MS. CARSON: I believe we have a question on
17 the phone. Just a moment. Can you identify yourself,
18 please?

19 MR. JENKINS: This is Calvin Jenkins.

20 MS. CARSON: It's Calvin Jenkins?

21 MR. JENKINS: Yes, yes.

22 MS. CARSON: Go ahead.

23 MR. JENKINS: I'm over at SourceAmerica, and
24 the point that the last speaker brought up is actually
25 occurring now. VA has sent out information to their

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1 folks basically saying that any requirement that is in
2 the JWOD Act now must be reviewed under the Vet First
3 Program, and that affected a procurement we just had
4 that was in the AbilityOne Program since 1995. So
5 that's happening right now.

6 MR. LENEY: Yes, indeed. We think the court
7 case is pretty clear. Actually, it's very clear, and
8 we have now implemented policies to comply with the
9 court.

10 MS. CARSON: And that was Tom Lenev from the
11 Department of Veteran Affairs. Thank you.

12 MR. LENEY: Right.

13 MS. CARSON: Okay, at this time, we are going
14 to move to the presentation on capital access. And if
15 we miss anyone who had a question, there is time for
16 public comment at the end of this meeting.

17 So I am pleased to introduce John Miller, the
18 Deputy Associate Administrator for SBA's Office of
19 Capital Access.

20 MR. MILLER: Thank you, Barb. Good afternoon,
21 everybody. Again, I'm going to talk about the SBA
22 lending, particularly with regards to veterans lending.
23 I know I presented here about two years ago, and I'm
24 glad to be back.

25 SBA loan volume, if you look at the first

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1 chart, this is a time period comparison, activity
2 through March 31st of each fiscal year. And our loan
3 volume in 7(a) and in the 504 program are both up. And
4 the volume level in 7(a) has carried forward -- on
5 these charts, it's up around 10 percent, 10 to 11
6 percent. Volume in 7(a) is now currently up closer to
7 8 percent. But -- and 504 is up even farther than they
8 are in this chart. In these charts, it's up 9 percent
9 year over year, and currently 504 lending has taken
10 off. It's up 14 percent year over year, and it's
11 having a very strong finish, potentially due to the
12 increasing interest rate environment because 504 has a
13 fixed rate component.

14 The number of 7(a) loans, however, is down.
15 While we applaud the volume of dollars being higher,
16 the number of loans is down. We would like to see the
17 number of loans being made also increase. Now, what
18 this is telling us is that the loan sizes are going up,
19 and we really want to focus on our small-dollar lending
20 as well. 504, on the other hand, it has an increase in
21 both dollar and number this year over last year.

22 We can go to the next slide. This is a
23 snapshot of veterans lending as of March 31st. So on
24 the chart on the right, you can see that as of March
25 31st in 2017 we are down from 2016, and that is dollar

<p style="text-align: right;">53</p> <p>1 -- dollars of lending in -- for veteran loans. We're 2 down about 18 percent from where we were in 2016. 3 However, we had some additional fee waivers last year 4 that we are not -- we did not have this fiscal year. 5 You may remember that some of the fee waivers from 2016 6 we were unable to carry those over into 2017. 7 The number of loans, however, is down only 8 slightly. That's down 1.9 percent. So even though our 9 dollars are down, the largest loans are not being made. 10 We're happy to see that the number of loans is 11 somewhere in the neighborhood of where it was last 12 year. 13 Also, keep in mind, if you look at the -- back 14 up one -- if you look at 2014, where we were, and I 15 believe it was -- I know it was 2014 when I came to 16 present because we had seen an increase right before I 17 came from '15 of '14, and we were hoping that would 18 continue. That was the big question, and obviously it 19 did continue. 20 But where we are over 2014 today, we're still 21 over 50 percent above where we were in dollars, dollar- 22 wise, from 2014. So while we had banner years in '15 23 and '16, we're still up 50 percent from where we were 24 in '14, and up 47 percent in number of loans to 25 veterans over where we were in 2014.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">55</p> <p>1 mandated -- is mandated as long as the 7(a) program 2 remains with zero subsidy, that is, that the losses 3 from the program are paid for by the fees generated 4 through the program. So it's at no cost to the 5 taxpayer. 6 The third bullet point up there says the 7 Veterans Advantage, loans 150,000 and up to 500,000 8 during 2017, the fee was one-half. So it says 1.5 9 percent, but it's really what -- one-half of what the 10 normal rate is for an up-front guarantee fee for a 11 borrower. So that is for Fiscal Year '17 also. 12 And, then, for the loans of 500,000 on up, 13 while we had fee -- while we were able to do fee 14 waivers in '16 for that category, in '17, we have not 15 been able to -- we were not able to carry that over. 16 So we've had the standard fee rates apply to loans over 17 500,000. Same for veterans as for nonveterans. 18 A couple of key pieces there. Our coding -- 19 our loan coding is voluntary. So one of the things 20 that we know for certain happened in '16 and in '17 for 21 loans that where a veteran took advantage of fee 22 relief, they had to code those loans as a veteran. 23 They had to not only state that they're a veteran in 24 the loan application and provide their paperwork to 25 prove it, the lender had to make sure that that code</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">54</p> <p>1 Now, you can take the next slide. Now, this 2 is a -- this slide shows what the veteran fee relief is 3 for 2017. It looks like it's written as in future 4 tense, but it -- this is the current, present tense. 5 So just a reminder of where we are. Loans for \$150,000 6 or less, all 7(a) loans, veteran and nonveteran, have a 7 zero -- zero fee charge to the borrower. 8 What's different from 2016 is we also had a 9 fee that was charged -- we also charge an ongoing 10 guarantee fee to the lender to keep the guarantee in 11 place. That was waived as well in '16, but in '17, 12 that went away. So while there's still an incentive 13 for lending for borrowers to take advantage of our 14 program, some of the lenders didn't push the small 15 loans as heavily as they did in '16 because they now 16 had to pay a fee, and small loans are administratively 17 costly to lenders. 18 For the SBA Express loans, all of the up-front 19 guarantee fees due to the veteran -- due to the 20 Veterans Entrepreneurship Act, the guarantee fees are 21 zero on all of the express loans. And that's 22 statutorily prescribed, and that has continued from '16 23 into '17, and obviously will continue into '18, as long 24 as the program remains in zero subsidy. 25 So, again, that statutory -- statutorily</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">56</p> <p>1 was transferred over to SBA. 2 So when the fee waivers no longer apply to a 3 certain category of loan, there's no longer a real 4 incentive for the veteran to provide all of the 5 paperwork to show that they're a veteran. And, 6 therefore, lenders aren't required either to report it. 7 So what I'm trying to say is the loan -- it's likely 8 that the loans of 500,000 up to a million do have, in 9 fact, more veterans than are coded in the system. 10 And all of our lending, whether it's minority 11 lending, based on race or ethnicity or, in this case, 12 veterans, that's voluntary. Even reporting on sex as 13 far as a female/male is also voluntary based upon the 14 applicant. So there's no mandate currently on any 15 commercial lending that requires that this reporting be 16 done. 17 Now, there is a -- there is legislation -- or 18 there's a regulation pending from the Consumer Finance 19 Protection -- Financial Protection Bureau that would 20 require lenders to report on commercial lending for 21 minorities, veterans, and so forth, but at this point, 22 there is no mandated reporting. So our data is -- it's 23 not 100 percent reliable for what's nonreported, but 24 what is reported from veterans is reliable. 25 Next slide, please. This last slide shows</p>

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1 what the actual veterans fee relief was during 2015 and
2 '16 and when we began the process in '14. So this
3 year, of course, it will be lower because we have not
4 been able to provide all of the fee waivers forward
5 that we had in '16 and in '15.

6 Any questions?

7 MS. CARSON: It's not friendly fire, but it's
8 coming from your own agency.

9 MR. MILLER: Yes.

10 MS. CARSON: John, thank you for coming. I do
11 have questions.

12 MR. MILLER: Yes.

13 MS. CARSON: Do veterans continue to be the --
14 see the most drop-off in loan activity this year in
15 Fiscal '17 compared to other demographics?

16 MR. MILLER: Yes. Based upon -- on dollar
17 amount, yes, but not on -- not necessarily on number.
18 We are actually up in small loans for veterans and
19 relatively steady as far as number of loans. It's just
20 the dollar size loans. We're not making as many large
21 loans to veterans, or as I mentioned, veterans aren't
22 coding the loans, and lenders aren't passing it along
23 because they're -- because of the -- because there was
24 such an incentive in the past -- when they're getting
25 the fee rebate, there is definitely an incentive to

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1 provide that paperwork.

2 So we really don't know what the true drop-off
3 is, but it can't be any lower than what's being
4 reported here.

5 MS. CARSON: And this program runs through
6 September 30th of this year, so will there be
7 information, do you know, at this time that you could
8 tell us at the September meeting of this group and
9 what's modeled for Fiscal '18?

10 MR. MILLER: Yes. During -- again, the
11 modeling has been put forward, you know, in the
12 President's budget. We are looking for a zero subsidy
13 here again in 7(a), which is great news for veterans
14 because that means that the statutorily prescribed fee
15 waiver of 350,000 or less for the express program, that
16 fee being zero, that will still be in the -- available.

17 What we don't know is what other fees will be
18 available, what other fees we can waive at this point
19 in time. And we won't know that until after our re-
20 estimates are complete in the third quarter, which
21 means we will be able to present that in September.

22 MS. CARSON: And it's Barb one more time, but
23 making a tie from what we learned from Joe's about the
24 sole proprietors and the smaller businesses and the
25 need for capital, the small dollar loans are important

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1 to us, so I am grateful for that performance.

2 We do have Street Shares Foundation, who is a
3 member of this body, to also help us look at other
4 things we could be doing to reach those veteran
5 borrowers, and as much as any of us can communicate, I
6 still -- those things that are voluntary, it would be
7 very helpful to us as an agency if people went ahead
8 and filled it out. It's really hard to scope what the
9 demand is and where we're missing folks if they're not
10 providing information in the very few places we can
11 actually collect it.

12 So are there any questions in the room or on
13 the phone?

14 MR. ROCKEFELLER: Yeah, this is Mark
15 Rockefeller from Street Shares Foundation on the phone.
16 Thank you for that presentation and for that data. So
17 it sounds like there's a -- sort of a theory that the
18 down numbers for veterans are because they never
19 reported. Has anything been done to prove that theory?
20 That is, surveys with lenders or any sort of, you know,
21 empirical data that we have to show that that is, in
22 fact, the cause for the downturn in veterans lending
23 that we see?

24 MR. MILLER: No, there hasn't been any study.
25 That is just trends in the industry and our experience

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1 with the industry and knowing that reporting for banks
2 costs money. And, so, if they don't, we know that if
3 the lenders don't have to do it -- they're for-profit
4 institutions -- they aren't going to ask the veterans
5 to provide the paperwork.

6 And, similarly, it's less burden on the
7 veteran to provide the paperwork if there really isn't
8 any fee advantage for them. While we would like to
9 allow -- we would like to encourage them to report that
10 they're a veteran, there's really no fee incentive for
11 them to do it. But to answer your question, no, we
12 have not conducted a study on that or taken a survey.

13 MR. ROCKEFELLER: Is there any way that the --
14 just kind of being entrepreneurial here -- that the
15 borrower could have to report that directly to the SBA
16 to receive the discount? For example, after getting
17 their loan they then go to the SBA, report their
18 veteran status, and then get, you know, a rebate, for
19 example, on those fees. It would give the SBA a chance
20 to collect all kinds of useful data at that point
21 directly from the borrower.

22 MR. MILLER: Well, let me clarify that. For
23 the veterans who are getting the fee rebate, they are
24 in this data. They are reported accurately. And that
25 has to be reported or they cannot obtain the fee -- I

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1 shouldn't say rebate. They cannot obtain the fee
 2 waivers.
 3 It's the veterans who are not obtaining where
 4 there's no fee relief available. Those are the
 5 veterans that -- where it is hard to incent them to
 6 report or incent the lenders to report, even though we
 7 do -- we do encourage our lenders to report on all of
 8 their loans, especially veterans, when we speak with
 9 our lenders. We can't guarantee that they are
 10 reporting; we can't require that they report.
 11 MR. ROCKEFELLER: Okay, thank you. No, I
 12 understand. But no benefit can be given to them, it
 13 doesn't matter from whom they get it. Thank you.
 14 MR. MILLER: That's -- that is correct.
 15 MS. SAGESTER: Good afternoon. My name is
 16 Cherylynn Sagester. I'm the Director of the Veteran
 17 Business Outreach Center located at Old Dominion
 18 University in Norfolk, Virginia. Thank you to Ms.
 19 Barbara Carson for inviting me to participate in this
 20 meeting this afternoon. I generally listen. I'm
 21 usually one of those out there in cyberworld listening
 22 every quarter.
 23 My question is as someone who is directing a
 24 program where we solely focus on veteran business
 25 development, and we're boots on the ground out there

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1 with these folks trying to help them secure funding,
 2 which is our biggest obstacle, as you most -- most all
 3 of you know, I have a couple of questions.
 4 Number one, these metrics that have been
 5 captured, I'm sure they do not include our veteran
 6 entrepreneurs that cannot find access to capital.
 7 They're a startup, they are looking to start a
 8 business on a credit card or a line of credit, and --
 9 but they -- and they end up, most of them, being
 10 successful doing that, but they're not included in
 11 these metrics, is that correct, because these are just
 12 the small business loans like the 7(a) and so on and so
 13 forth?
 14 MR. MILLER: That is correct. What is being
 15 reported here are the actual loans -- the SBA loans
 16 that have been approved. So these are the veterans
 17 that not only qualified for the loan, but the loan was
 18 actually made, approved, for the veteran.
 19 MS. SAGESTER: Therefore, my point is, I
 20 guess, those veterans that are bootstrapping their own
 21 startup costs because, for example, we have a lot of
 22 Reservists and National Guard that suffered greatly
 23 from this last war due to multiple deployments. Their
 24 credit was wrecked. They would think that they could
 25 live off credit card, to make up the gap, the

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1 difference between their civilian income and their
 2 military pay income based on being activated, and they
 3 would come back and only be back six months, and didn't
 4 have enough time to pay that credit card debt off until
 5 they were off and activated again for maybe another
 6 year.
 7 Financially, it wrecked these families and
 8 wrecked their credit. So, therefore, they're not able
 9 to qualify for, say, an SBA 7(a). So their only choice
 10 is to bootstrap by a line of credit or maybe a credit
 11 card. Is there something that this committee can do to
 12 try to be able to capture those metrics and get those
 13 folks that are -- that fall into that gap somehow over
 14 it.
 15 I know that the fee -- waiving the fee helped
 16 a lot. It helped several of our clients, but we've got
 17 this huge -- we've got this huge number of folks that
 18 they have the experience; they have the education; they
 19 have the training, especially through military, but
 20 it's qualifying them that's killing them and holding
 21 them back. It could be something that could help, as
 22 Barb was saying, to raise our veteran small business
 23 numbers up if there's some way we could tackle that
 24 problem. That's really all I wanted to point out.
 25 MR. MILLER: Thank you for that comment, and

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1 we do share the concern. One of our programs that I
 2 haven't highlighted is our microloan program, and some
 3 of our micro lenders, they -- essentially, they'll make
 4 a loan to help a small business applicant restore their
 5 credit. So that's the first loan. It's a small loan.
 6 It helps them build their credit so they can apply for
 7 then a larger loan with the micro lender.
 8 And what we're trying to do is graduate those
 9 startups or those with less than adequate credit --
 10 graduate them up into the microloan program and then up
 11 into the 7(a) program. So that -- we are -- we are
 12 working to establish that process where we can help
 13 those that cannot currently qualify for a 7(a) loan.
 14 MS. CARSON: And, John, may I ask you to say a
 15 word about Community Advantage as well?
 16 MR. MILLER: Yes, exactly. Thank you, Barb.
 17 Our Community Advantage is our 7(a) loan program, but
 18 it's a pilot loan program, and it is essentially
 19 offered by nonprofit lenders. Those lenders specialize
 20 in making loans -- it's not only -- yes, it also is
 21 targeted towards emerging markets and veterans, that 60
 22 percent of the Community Advantage lenders' loans have
 23 to go to one of our targeted areas, either veterans or
 24 underserved or women or rural loans.
 25 The Community Advantage also allows a lower

<p style="text-align: right;">65</p> <p>1 credit score, a lower FICO credit score, in the program 2 than the traditional 7(a) program allows. So you can 3 think of it as kind of a ladder -- microloans being 4 probably the first place somebody that did not have 5 adequate credit would go; and then we would graduate 6 them. And many of our micro lenders are also Community 7 Advantage lenders.</p> <p>8 So once we rebuild the credit, start the 9 business, get the business operating, and then the 10 borrower needs more than \$50,000 in capital for credit, 11 which is the ceiling on the -- the cap on the 12 microloan, that lender can then graduate them into a 13 Community Advantage loan or refer them to a Community 14 Advantage lender if they are not. And Community 15 Advantage also has the option to provide technical 16 assistance, which, of course, is mandatory in the 17 microloan program. So not only do we want to help our 18 veterans get into business but keep them in business 19 through offering post-loan technical assistance.</p> <p>20 MS. CARSON: Thanks, John. And thanks, 21 Cherylynn, for sharing what it is like outside of DC 22 for the business owners that are trying to get that 23 capital.</p> <p>24 And sometimes you want to give someone the 25 stick to hit you with, so this is the one I had for</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">67</p> <p>1 MR. LENEY: Good afternoon. This is Tom Lene 2 from the Department of Veterans Affairs. One of the 3 things that we have realized, particularly in the 4 aftermath of the Supreme Court decision which 5 reinforced the importance of 38 USC 8127, the Veterans 6 First Program of the VA, is the importance of market 7 research so that veteran-owned small businesses can 8 receive appropriate consideration with respect to 9 procurement decisions.</p> <p>10 The Secretary of the Department of Veterans 11 Affairs has made a conscious decision that -- and I 12 think it is very consistent with the statute and is 13 certainly consistent with the Supreme Court decision -- 14 that our engagement with veteran-owned small businesses 15 is not about socioeconomic goals. In fact, we don't 16 view veteran-owned small business as a socioeconomic 17 program.</p> <p>18 As a colleague of mine mentioned yesterday, 19 it's an earned program. People earn the ability to be 20 a veteran. And, so, it puts an added emphasis on 21 market research. And we are -- have been working to 22 improve the ability of the Department of Veteran 23 Affairs to do market research and to provide adequate 24 consideration. We are not there yet. In fact, we are 25 not close. But I've asked John Fedkenheuer, my program</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">66</p> <p>1 this committee, is that at some point during this year 2 that we could frame what would be the research question 3 that we would want to investigate as related to access 4 to capital for veterans and what role this committee 5 might have in that. I know that Mark Rockefeller, who 6 is on the line from Street Shares Foundation, has 7 framed some of that for us, and I invite you, Mark, to 8 consider bringing that to the committee in one of the 9 next two meetings, if you're willing.</p> <p>10 MR. ROCKEFELLER: Yes, yes, happy to do so. 11 Thanks, Barb.</p> <p>12 MS. CARSON: Thank you. We are going to take 13 a short pause as one of the -- I'm sorry for those who 14 are on the phone, some of the value for those of us in 15 the room is to make acquaintances, hear some of the 16 issues, and then we will come back for the remainder of 17 the meeting, which is report outs and where -- how much 18 progress we've made on the recommendations, which will 19 be given by each of the agencies.</p> <p>20 So the time is half past the hour. Please 21 come back at 40 past the hour. If you know me, we're 22 going to start on time, so see you soon.</p> <p>23 (Brief recess.)</p> <p>24 MS. CARSON: Please, everyone, we're back on 25 the record.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">68</p> <p>1 management and program support team in my office, to 2 talk about what we are using as an interim measure 3 because what we found is there's tremendous power in 4 information.</p> <p>5 And one of the biggest problems we have both 6 on the -- not only on the veteran-owned small business 7 side where people are often desperate for information, 8 but on the government side, where we lack information, 9 we lack the ability to analyze the data, and therefore 10 we don't make good market research decisions and don't 11 make good procurement decisions.</p> <p>12 So with that, I'm going to turn this over to 13 John to give you a couple things of background, and 14 then he wants to show you a tool that we are currently 15 using for that purpose.</p> <p>16 MR. FEDKENHEUER: Thank you, sir. Once again, 17 my name is John Fedkenheuer with the VA OSDDBU Office. 18 When we started really looking at market research as an 19 enterprise issue, as opposed to individual contracting 20 officers and contracting activities, we had some -- we 21 met with some program offices, we met with some 22 contracting shops, we did several different industry 23 sessions. And we noticed some common challenges across 24 the enterprise with market research. And some of those 25 include the lack of an enterprise workflow process, a</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">69</p> <p>1 standardized workflow process that everybody agrees to. 2 So we've been working towards that. 3 Of course, everybody has staff constraints 4 with, you know, as after post-Kingdomware decision, 5 we've really started pushing the market research 6 process into the program offices and holding them a lot 7 more accountable for providing adequate market research 8 as they develop their requirements packages, right, to 9 get to contracting. 10 So staff -- there's a lot of staff constraints 11 within the program offices, particularly in levels of 12 experience, time, commitments. You know, they've got 13 multiple actions that they're trying to do at any one 14 time. So we're trying to develop tools and 15 technologies that will enable them to do things much 16 faster, much more efficiently, reuse the data on a 17 consistent basis, have a historical perspective that we 18 can use for further research down the road. 19 So we don't have at the current time a single 20 technology platform that will do everything that we 21 want it to do related to market research and getting 22 contact between the program folks and the veteran 23 business community, right? We find that -- as Mr. 24 Leney, you probably heard him many times say that that 25 direct access piece, that access between the veteran</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">71</p> <p>1 Academy, which is our training arm, to standardize 2 training across the enterprise and market research and 3 all of those appropriate things. 4 What we do have right now is a very robust 5 data-mining platform that we utilize for market 6 research purposes. And we have our contract partners, 7 FEDMINE, with us. They'll talk you through some of the 8 search parameters that they can do. It's got a very 9 robust drill-down capability. We don't really have -- 10 I know we're kind of short on time, so we don't have 11 time to really drill down through everything, but we'll 12 show you some of the research parameters. We'll show 13 you the ability to review company profiles, the ability 14 to review agency profiles, and those type of things. 15 And then my contact information is available, 16 you know, if anybody has questions post-meeting today 17 or at any other time. So I'd like to -- you want to 18 introduce your folks, or? 19 MR. MEHAN: Yeah, yeah. My name is Ashok 20 Mehan. I'm the president, founder, and CEO of FEDMINE. 21 It's been in use at the -- in the Federal Government, 22 as well as with prime contractors, for about ten years 23 now. And we aggregate data from 16 different data 24 sources, so it becomes more contextual. You know, 25 you're not viewing protests without seeing the</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">70</p> <p>1 business community and the program managers is critical 2 to the process. 3 So one of the things that we're working 4 towards is building into the technology platform the 5 capability for them to easily and efficiently contact 6 each other back and forth, set up events, do automated 7 requests for information and sources sought, all those 8 kind of things. So we're working towards that. 9 A couple of things that we're trying to get 10 into this program is we want to standardize everything 11 across the enterprise, right? We want to develop a 12 technology solution that is going to make it easier for 13 our folks to meet that rule of two requirement, 38 USC 14 8127(d). We want to capture data and reuse it. And we 15 want to integrate it with our other systems. 16 We have a contract-writing system that we use. 17 We're in the process of building an enterprise 18 financial management system that will also integrate 19 our contract-writing system, so from soup to nuts 20 essentially, from appropriations to the contract 21 closeout, everything will be tied together. 22 And the integration of all those pieces is, 23 you know, the devil is always in the details. So we're 24 looking at a lot of that right now to see how we can do 25 that, and we're working with our VA Acquisition</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">72</p> <p>1 solicitation or without seeing the award that was -- 2 that originated the protest and that kind of things, 3 and even the solicitations from FBO, with all the 4 contact information of contracting officers and 5 officers that is in there. So we can -- so we would 6 like to show you some of the capability generally 7 applied for the Veterans Administration. 8 Archisha Mehan and Lindsay Carry. 9 MS. MEHAN: Good afternoon. Thank you for 10 taking the time. We are excited to show you FEDMINE. 11 Okay, so one of the things I do want to mention, on our 12 website, you will see federal data sources, and the 13 first one that is listed there is FPDS-NG. We do have 14 a direct external feed into FPDS-NG. What this really 15 means is that every night we update our database from 16 FPDS-NG and all of the other various sources. 17 The other thing that is very unique to our 18 database is the fact that we do not touch the data. 19 The data is as it is in the system. We believe that it 20 is an accessory that we preserve the integrity of data, 21 and what is really unique is our back-end data 22 architecture. So as we go through the slides, as we go 23 through the presentation, you will see that it's the 24 data -- the way we integrated data and the way we 25 presented data that is very unique. Having said that,</p>

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1 I'm going to -- we're going to start the presentation.
 2 MS. CARRY: Hi, everyone. I'm Lindsay Carry,
 3 and I'm actually our director of customer success for
 4 FEDMINE, so I manage all of our client relationships.
 5 I'm just going to walk you through very quickly,
 6 because I realize we only have about ten minutes. Some
 7 of our most widely used search and reporting functions
 8 were market research. So we're starting with our
 9 contract search here. We have several different
 10 criteria that you can use to structure a contract
 11 search.
 12 For today's purposes, I'm just going to search
 13 for a requirement key word "cloud." We do use Boolean
 14 search logic, so you can keep going with this string.
 15 I'm going to search across all years. We pull data
 16 going all the way back to 2004. And we are going to
 17 use the VA as an agency. You can get much more
 18 granular with your searches. I'm going to point out
 19 some things like location criteria, NAICS, and PSCs,
 20 contract amounts. And then at the bottom here you have
 21 different socioeconomic status and set-aside types.
 22 So we'll go ahead and run this search. And
 23 this is really useful to understand who the contractors
 24 are that are winning work at the VA with the required
 25 cloud. So we have our list here. There are 244

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1 entries, as you can see. You are able to download any
 2 of this information to use for your purposes, either
 3 transactions or transactions with contacts, even
 4 downloading the contact information for the people
 5 within the company.
 6 To go into a transaction, I'm going to choose
 7 the total dollars here. This is for Terremark Federal
 8 Group. You'll notice that our platform, we do call out
 9 the key words that you put in. So "cloud" is
 10 highlighted there so you understand exactly why this
 11 was pulled back for you.
 12 We are connecting all of the various different
 13 sources of data, as Archisha mentioned. So you'll see
 14 here, this is an FPDS-NG transaction detail page, but
 15 we've also connected the original RFP from FPO -- from
 16 FBO, excuse me. And, also, wherever possible, we're
 17 connecting this to the contracting data as well from
 18 ESRS.
 19 So we have all of the original documents. As
 20 we scroll down the page, you can see details like the
 21 number of offers received, the competition type, the
 22 business size determination. And in this case, too,
 23 we've connected the Exhibit 53 and 300 details. This
 24 was also procured on Schedule 70, I believe. So there
 25 is a lot of information, as you can see. It's a very

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1 robust platform.
 2 From here, I do want to show you what a
 3 company profile looks like. We're just going to go
 4 back to our result set, if it allows me. So I'm going
 5 to go into Terremark Federal Group's company profile.
 6 The company profiles are going to show you things like
 7 organization details. We also call out our sources of
 8 data on every single page, so you can see the
 9 organization details are coming from SAM.
 10 I can also see who this contractor's top
 11 customers are. So their top customer is HHS; how
 12 they're performing year by year with the Federal
 13 Government. I can see all of their transactions. So
 14 it's like -- and then to sort. So far this year, they
 15 have won the most awards with the State Department. I
 16 can also go in and see what those transactions are.
 17 Below that, you have any GSA contract actions,
 18 contracts they're winning by extent and competition,
 19 GSA Schedules that they're on, and then also any
 20 subcontracts that they're winning. We also will show
 21 you subcontracts that they are awarding.
 22 If I scroll back up to the top here,
 23 additional information provided on the company
 24 profiles, you can see how they're winning contracts by
 25 NAICS and PSCs, also by category, set-aside,

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1 socioeconomic status. So there's so many different
 2 data points that you see here based on the contractor.
 3 And as I mentioned before, all of this
 4 information you're able to download. You can save
 5 things in our platform as well if you wanted to keep
 6 your eye on a specific company, to be notified of all
 7 of their federal transactions. If you save searches,
 8 you're notified of any -- anything new that meets that
 9 criteria.
 10 So we just went through the contract search
 11 and company profile. We'll also look at, you know,
 12 your forward-looking opportunities. So RFP search.
 13 I'm going to use a different example in this case. So
 14 this is what the search template looks like. You can
 15 put it in common information, key words, once again.
 16 So for this -- for demonstration purposes, I'm
 17 just going to type in cybersecurity. And I'm going to
 18 leave this open to all agencies. You could certainly
 19 choose the VA; you can choose multiple agencies. You
 20 just need to hold down your control key there. Go
 21 ahead and click search, and these are all of my open
 22 opportunities with the requirement cybersecurity.
 23 So I'm going to go into a particular one and
 24 take a look at market research. So the type of detail
 25 that we provide are your notice details here.

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1 Procurement description, once again, your key words
2 will always be highlighted for you, any contact
3 details, as well as documents. And you're able to
4 follow opportunities as well. So if you decide that
5 you want to keep track of an opportunity, you're easily
6 able to do that within your login, your account.

7 How are we doing on time?

8 Agency profiles are another thing that we
9 offer within our platform. So I'm going to switch over
10 there now. This is the VA agency profile. As you can
11 see here, you have some tabs here at the top. So you
12 could actually look at a profile by region, division,
13 or contracting office. For today's purposes, I'm just
14 going to look at the VA at the top level.

15 Once again, you're able to download any of
16 this information. You could also select a different
17 fiscal year. So your auto default is going to be for
18 FY17. I can see my total expenditures, and then if I
19 scroll the page, you have these various different tabs
20 with more data points.

21 So the things that we provide you with are,
22 you know, who are your top ten small business primes.
23 This is by socioeconomic status. The default certainly
24 is small business, but you can actually choose a
25 different socioeconomic status. So if I wanted to go

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1 in and choose, you know, veteran-owned business, for
2 example, these are my top ten.

3 And then within this view, you know,
4 everything is linked, so you can go in and you can
5 check out the transactions for the VA for any of these
6 small business contractors.

7 You have your top ten contracting offices for
8 the VA. What are the most widely used of GWACs for
9 that agency? Competition categories. Things like your
10 top GSA sales, access to an agency goaling report for
11 every agency. Who is winning business for the first
12 time? Who are the top small business contractors
13 winning business for the first time?

14 Then we also show you -- so those are first-
15 time overall with the Federal Government. You can also
16 see who's winning business for the first time at a
17 specific agency. Any solicitation and grant key steps,
18 top agency programs, and also your solicitations issued
19 by the agency in chronological order.

20 So the last thing that I want to show you for
21 today's quick demonstration purposes is an industry
22 profile. So we looked at a company profile, an agency
23 profile, and now we're going to take a look at an
24 industry profile. The one that I have pulled up here
25 is for 541511. You can put in as many codes as you

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1 like. You just pull down your search criteria here.
2 You could also confine this to a specific agency or
3 group of agencies. This is overall with the Federal
4 Government.

5 So the types of things that we show you here
6 are who the top prime contractors are, your top ten
7 agencies awarding under that code, your top bureaus,
8 the set-asides that are being used. And, so, if I
9 wanted to go in and say, you know, who's winning these
10 woman-owned small business set-aside contracts within
11 that NAICS code, I can just go ahead and click on the
12 dollar value there, and here are those companies. And
13 then I could take that further and we could look at the
14 detailed page from FPDS as well as the solicitations.

15 So I think everyone got the point there of the
16 industry profile. Just a few other quick things. I
17 mean, I've only shown you, I think, five different
18 reports that you have -- you would have access to or
19 the VA has access to in our market research tool. And,
20 you know, beyond that, we have some dollar band
21 reports. We can show you subcontractor searches, the
22 contractor data in various different ways.

23 You can search for contracting offices and
24 officers and all of the solicitations and awards that
25 they're tied to. We have goaling reports for different

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1 agencies, with and without exclusions. If we had more
2 time, I would show you that, but that does exist in our
3 product as well. But I think I've gone almost to time,
4 and I definitely want to be able to answer any
5 questions that you have for us.

6 MR. LENEY: This is a work in progress, okay?
7 We have invested in the market research capability,
8 believing that that's essential for veteran-owned small
9 businesses to be properly considered. So what I ask of
10 the group on the government side, we're prepared to
11 give access to this tool for you to tell us how it can
12 work better for you.

13 Obviously, as you see from the presentation,
14 this is -- we're building it and configuring it for the
15 VA, but it's easily built and configured and has
16 capacity to do all agencies. And what we believe is if
17 there's a good idea at the Department of Labor,
18 something you need to know to facilitate market
19 research, we probably need to know the same thing.

20 On the veteran-owned small business side, we
21 also solicit your input because we see this as a
22 marketplace. We need to see both sides. Yeah,
23 veteran-owned small businesses need to see what the
24 opportunities are, what the requirements are, who has
25 them, and how might you connect with them. And then on

<p style="text-align: right;">81</p> <p>1 our side, obviously, we need to know what the vendors 2 can do.</p> <p>3 And you see, you know, this is an almost 4 impossible demonstration to follow, and the message -- 5 what I want you to walk away with is there's enormous 6 capacity here, and we're not done. This is a work in 7 progress, and what we want to do is how do we configure 8 it to make it easy for the small businesses to extract 9 what they need and to make it easy for the government 10 people to extract what they need.</p> <p>11 So, really, why did we bring this, because we 12 want your input for making this tool better.</p> <p>13 MR. ARRIETA: My name is Jose Arrieta. I'm 14 the Director of IT70, so it's a good find on your part. 15 But I was -- I'm told January -- I just started on 16 Schedule 70 January 9th. I was the OSDBU of Treasury, 17 and I just wanted to kind of applaud Tom for a second 18 and what the folks at VA are doing. And when we were 19 at -- my Treasury team actually provided feedback on 20 this tool and something else that Tom's working on.</p> <p>21 And I think that it's very important that we 22 understand that the hardest thing for federal agencies 23 is to actually identify the segment of marketplace, and 24 a lot of the data tools that exist don't provide this 25 level of insight. And, so, this is a tool that across</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">83</p> <p>1 is from the market research that we've done into what 2 are the most important things to veteran businesses. 3 And this is a huge tool for that.</p> <p>4 There does -- there is training for veteran 5 businesses and for all small businesses to -- how do 6 I use FBO, how do I use FPDS, how do I use Gov-Business 7 -- USA Spending. In order for a small business, 8 especially somebody coming into federal government 9 contracting, to use those tools to gain the information 10 that you can gain from a tool like this is a huge 11 barrier. There are tools out there, probably a 12 competitor, like DellTech, that can charge \$30-, \$50-, 13 100,000 a year to aggregate this data.</p> <p>14 So my question is to FEDMINE, is to is this 15 tool or something like this tool available now for 16 purchase to veteran -- or for, you know, to small 17 businesses in general, and what is the pricing scheme? 18 What is that barrier to entry so the small business 19 isn't putting the whole analytical team just to comb 20 FPDS and crosslink it with FBO and all the other tools 21 that are out there?</p> <p>22 MS. MEHAN: Well, I'll be happy to answer 23 that. We've been live for more than ten years. We 24 started -- the company was started by Ashok. He was a 25 small business owner who was in federal contracting,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">82</p> <p>1 the OSDBU community and the acquisition community for 2 market research can really drive value for federal 3 agencies.</p> <p>4 And on the flip side, you know, if you're a 5 company and you're trying to be laser-focused on a 6 specific marketplace where you think you can drive 7 sales, this is a way that you can actually focus your 8 agency. What region do we work in? What is the dollar 9 value in terms of a size of deal that we should go 10 after in terms of how much we can scale?</p> <p>11 So I just want to applaud the VA for doing 12 this work and just point out that I truly think it can 13 be impactful, both within government and outside.</p> <p>14 MR. LENEY: And you can talk to Mr. Mehan 15 afterwards if you are interested in gaining access to 16 the tool. He's prepared to facilitate that, but the 17 requirement is you got to give us some feedback. Okay, 18 there's no such thing as a free lunch. Okay?</p> <p>19 MR. PHIPPS: This is Michael Phipps with the 20 Legion. This -- this whole topic, there's a committee 21 tomorrow, the Advisory Committee on Veteran Business 22 Affairs. Even more important than access to capital 23 for veteran businesses is business development, right? 24 So there's a lot of training that goes on. And this 25 came from a survey and from a couple surveys, and this</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">84</p> <p>1 and this company truly is a vision of what he wished he 2 had at that point of time. Most of our clients today 3 are small business owners and large businesses, too, 4 find the data in FEDMINE amazingly easy to use, 5 especially the subcontractor data.</p> <p>6 Our price points start -- we work with the 7 small business. We understand. We are nowhere close 8 to being as expensive as DelTek program is. And we 9 would be very happy to work with small businesses.</p> <p>10 MR. MEHAN: But the price point is about 11 \$5,000.</p> <p>12 MS. MEHAN: Yes, the price is about 5,000. I 13 wish I could say monthly, but I can't. It is 5,000 on 14 an annual basis.</p> <p>15 MR. MEHAN: And it's available right now.</p> <p>16 MR. PHIPPS: Okay, thank you.</p> <p>17 MS. CARSON: So that was off-microphone. This 18 is Barb Carson, SBA. So the price point was noted, and 19 it is available to small business owners. Again, this 20 is -- we're addressing recommendation -- let's see -- 21 1.2, which was some transparency in -- for business 22 owners on how the federal government finds you. And is 23 doing a better job of segmenting the market.</p> <p>24 Any other comment, Tom?</p> <p>25 MR. LENEY: Yeah, one -- if you could go to</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">85</p> <p>1 the dashboard, I just want to let you peak behind the 2 curtain of what we're doing at the VA. These folks 3 have developed a dashboard for us that we're putting on 4 the desktops of our senior acquisition professionals, 5 our secretary, our deputy secretary, so that we can 6 track on a realtime basis how we're doing. 7 And, so, we see -- we see a platform like this 8 -- and I'm not here to give a commercial for FEDMINE -- 9 but they've done a lot of work with us and we've helped 10 them to build out this platform. We're going to 11 continue to build out the platform, and I'm going to 12 assert -- Ashok is giving a special limited time access 13 for people that are associated with the task force. 14 (Laughter.) 15 MR. LENEY: Through a fund, okay, to get -- so 16 you guys can see what a tool like this can do, because 17 one of the most difficult things we found is how do you 18 build the requirements for this tool. This has been, 19 what, three years we've been working this? And the 20 biggest challenge we have right now, there's so much 21 here, how do we design it to make it accessible. So 22 you guys can get access, but you got to give us some 23 feedback. 24 MS. CARSON: Thanks. So Veteran Affairs is 25 making this offer to the agencies represented on the</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">87</p> <p>1 still online and there's a toolkit that sort of 2 summarizes how to -- how to overcome some of those 3 barriers that this next phase is going to address on an 4 even broader scale, to include nonveteran kinds of 5 MLSS. 6 We don't have a whole lot of beauticians in 7 the military by MLS, but that's one of the areas that 8 people who are spouses perhaps or other skillsets that 9 move around and become dislocated workers now would 10 benefit from overcoming some of those obstacles. So I 11 wanted to reinforce that, that you highlighted, Barb. 12 Thanks. 13 Another part that Barb mentioned was the 14 ongoing way that we're trying to, at multiple levels, 15 build relationships and networks between anybody who 16 has anything to do with veterans who either work for 17 another veteran, work for themselves, or work for 18 somebody. And, so, Barb mentioned her team getting 19 plugged in with the National Association of State 20 Workforce Agencies. So those are the public workforce 21 folks that staff up the American job centers at 2,400 22 places around the country. 23 In addition to that professional organization, 24 I wanted to highlight a couple of other things that are 25 going on where we're trying to get the information out,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">86</p> <p>1 Interagency Task Force. I appreciate that. 2 MR. LENEY: You guys have an open line. 3 You're special. 4 MR. MEHAN: Come over, guys, talk to me, okay? 5 We have access. 6 MS. CARSON: So we're going to move into 7 reports by agency, and we're going to return to the 8 agenda. And thank you so much, FEDMINE, for your 9 presentation, and VA, Mr. Fedkenheuer. And I really 10 appreciate the time you put into this. 11 We're going to start with the Department of 12 Labor, Bill Metheny. Go ahead. 13 MR. METHENY: Thanks, Barb. A couple things 14 to add on and sort of reinforce some of your earlier 15 remarks. You mentioned the study in the works from the 16 National Coalition of State Legislatures and the NGA, 17 National Governors Association. That really is sort of 18 phase two of this exploration. We've talked in this 19 group before about their initial report that was a 20 smaller pilot study that looked at a few key skillsets 21 coming out of the military and how those translate into 22 certifications and licensure around the country. 23 Some great lessons learned there. They looked 24 at some of the security skillsets, healthcare, vehicle 25 operators. So I mention that because that report is</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">88</p> <p>1 one of which is for those transitioning service members 2 who are going through the TAP process. We've talked 3 here a couple of different times about how do we make 4 sure that they know about the resources available to 5 them. 6 For instance, one of our recommendations in 7 this group has been if they're going through Boots to 8 Business, do they know that the American Job Centers 9 provide a great human resource asset to them when 10 they're looking to hire people, especially veterans. 11 So we're building that into the curriculum, and that's 12 in the works through the TAP interagency work group. 13 So I wanted to share that. 14 And then at the more local level, as recently 15 as yesterday, I was in Philadelphia with our regional 16 leaders for our agency, where they had a state director 17 for each of the five states in the sort of Mid-Atlantic 18 region meeting with their state employee counterparts 19 and talking about the networks that they're building. 20 And they each shared about how they get together for 21 their own state version of various roundtables to talk 22 about who's working what and were are the gaps and who 23 can cover those. 24 And, so, in that grouping of five states plus 25 DC, we talked about making sure that our VA</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">89</p> <p>1 counterparts and our SBA counterparts out in the 2 regions across the country are part of those 3 conversations, and if they're not, to invite them and 4 start sharing those. So just to highlight at multiple 5 levels how we're trying to make sure that everybody 6 knows who's out there and can help us provide the 7 services to veterans, so I wanted to highlight that. 8 Second, we have our Secretary of Labor 9 onboard, which is new since the last time we've gotten 10 to meet. Secretary Acosta is diving in with both feet. 11 We briefed him this past week on what's happening in 12 the veterans employment space, and he is encouraging us 13 to move rapidly in -- on a few different things, one of 14 which I'll tell you shortly. 15 He's certainly reinforcing some of the 16 priorities of the Administration, which includes 17 apprenticeship programs. And, so, the VA and DOL have 18 a great relationship and programs for apprenticeship 19 programs. Veterans fill a lot of those opportunities, 20 and the employers are very excited about how those are 21 working. So he asked us to keep going with that. 22 Another theme that we're really exploring is 23 public/private partnerships. And, so, what is it that 24 the governments at the federal and state level need to 25 do, and which ones do we not need to do and allow</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">91</p> <p>1 through our -- implementing our budgets and executing 2 the rest of this fiscal year, all of which came out in 3 an omnibus package which had an act in there as part of 4 its overall title, which is the Honoring Investments in 5 Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act 6 of 2017, also known as the HIRE Vets Act, or the HIRE 7 Vets Medallion Bill and Act now. 8 And, so, I want to share that because 9 Secretary Acosta said this new law, which is designed 10 to recognize employers who recruit, hire, and retain 11 veterans, it's on a cycle that's set since it requires 12 some regulation to get it out. It would normally take 13 a couple years. And he said how about if we have it on 14 the street by January of this coming year. And, so, 15 that's what we're working hard to do. 16 And, so, I would encourage you to keep an eye 17 out because we're going to be looking for comment as we 18 start to accelerate through this process. A couple of 19 highlights. This is a bill that will recognize 20 employers who do great things in those categories for 21 veterans. And there are a couple of categories of 22 awardees. Some are large companies; and there's a 23 separate category for smaller companies and businesses 24 to apply as well. 25 People -- businesses nominate themselves;</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">90</p> <p>1 others to do either cheaper or with more agility than 2 what governments can do. So that's part of what we're 3 exploring, in part, as part of our response to OMB's 4 directive to look at agency reforms. So how do we 5 incorporate those kinds of ideas into how we serve our 6 customers at various levels. So I wanted to share 7 that. 8 Most of you probably saw last Friday's numbers 9 report that highlight that veteran nonemployment rate 10 is down to 3.4 percent. 11 MS. CARSON: Yes. 12 MR. METHENY: 3.4 percent, which is at a ten- 13 year low. It's the non -- the nonveteran unemployment 14 rate that came out is 4.4 percent. So a full 15 percentage point, compared to the nonveteran 16 counterparts. 17 If you do not get the various newsletters that 18 highlight that with all the supporting data that go to 19 it, I would be happy to share how you can subscribe to 20 that so you get that push every month and can watch for 21 it and put it in context of whether it's a seasonal 22 rate or how do you look at it long-term and what do the 23 numbers mean. So I'd be happy to share that with you. 24 And, then, the last part I would highlight, 25 since we last met, so we're all busy with working</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">92</p> <p>1 provide their own information as a packet to support 2 their data; and we're working through what data's 3 required and how we look at all that. And it's self- 4 funded, meaning employers -- in order to receive this 5 award, which will be some sort of medallion, a 6 certificate of some sort, will pay some sort of a fee 7 to help cover the cost so that it's zero cost to the 8 government overall. 9 So those are all happening rapidly and 10 consuming a whole lot of time and energy to make sure 11 that we can make it go as quickly as possible. We're 12 doing a couple of different listening sessions to get 13 input as early -- some of them are going on now, and 14 they've been announced on the Federal Register and so 15 on, but we will be asking for more input as we go 16 through the coming year to ask those kinds of 17 questions. 18 We've gotten some great insights from some of 19 the larger organizations, to include unions, to help us 20 understand what employees count and what organizations 21 count and how we account for seasonal employees and all 22 those sorts of things. But I just want to highlight 23 and ask you to keep an eye out for that if that's of 24 interest to you. 25 And then one due out that I still owe this</p>

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1 task force is we talked about those veterans who are
2 going through training to -- and learning to become
3 their own business owners and entrepreneurs, and the
4 question is what benefits are available to them while
5 they're not currently working. Are they entitled to
6 unemployment benefits in their state? And the answer
7 is it depends. And, so, part of what I'm tasked to do
8 is not just tell you it depends and there are lots of
9 solutions but to see if we can pull that together.
10 And, so, that's still a due-out that I owe the task
11 force.

12 That's all I have. Thank you.

13 MS. CARSON: That was a great update. Is
14 there any question for Department of Labor at this
15 time? And if you don't have it right now, we will take
16 questions also toward the end.

17 Okay. Thank you again.

18 We're going to go to Department of Defense,
19 Dr. Jim Galvin.

20 DR. GALVIN: Thank you. Last time, I gave you
21 some fairly in-depth metrics, maybe not at the FEDMINE
22 level of detail. This time I'm looking at sort of a
23 higher level, department-level metrics. As you can see
24 here, this is where DOD spends, and just so the veteran
25 groups in particular have an appreciation for that,

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1 there's 20 industry sectors in the North American
2 Industry Classification System, the NAICS. And of
3 those, four of them is where DOD really spends most of
4 its money. And veterans play a significant role in
5 each of those as well.

6 For the most part, the veteran spending tracks
7 along with this. So the \$20.4 billion is all small
8 business spending in the first -- the 35 percent. And
9 of that, about \$6 billion of that is with veterans.
10 And with the service-disabled veterans, it's about \$4.2
11 billion, just to give you an idea.

12 So, essentially, the numbers I have there are
13 all small business spending, but the veterans portion
14 of that is roughly \$6 billion, \$2 billion in
15 manufacturing, about \$2 billion in construction, and
16 about a billion in the admin and support. So those
17 professional, scientific, and technical services are
18 really where the bulk of activity occurs.

19 Okay. Next slide. I just wanted to talk
20 about a few topic areas, just to bring to folks'
21 attention. The first one is sort of -- really there's
22 two major themes with the change of administration from
23 our perspective. One is that there's a push to
24 consolidate, and we're seeing that at the federal level
25 to reorganize, to eliminate duplication, to try to

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1 consolidate like activities, things of that nature.

2 The executive order translated to the OMB memo
3 that came out on 12 April that really started to get
4 into more specifics for federal agencies. And of that
5 consolidation, one area is looking at contracting and
6 doing strategic sourcing and category management, and
7 essentially that's to manage your supply chains. So
8 from the administration's perspective, we want to be
9 efficient and effective with supply chains, but from a
10 small business perspective, whether you're in the
11 government side or in the private sector, you may be
12 concerned about opportunities for small businesses.

13 So I'd just bring that up, and from a
14 government perspective, what we look at is can we get
15 involved in helping to forecast where the government
16 customers will be spending and then ideally what
17 vehicles they would be using to sort of signal that to
18 the market, and then if possible helping to shape that
19 as well so that when the small contract -- government-
20 wide contracts, multiple-award contracts, indefinite
21 delivery, indefinite quantity, those types of vehicles
22 that are out there, are they small-business-friendly
23 where they should be. If they're more for the full-
24 and-open market because of the size or the level of
25 complexity, then is there a good subcontracting

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1 consideration being given for small business.

2 So those are the things we're looking at, and
3 then on the small business side, they would also want
4 to make sure that when they look at these vehicles, you
5 know, they have to make strategic decisions themselves.
6 What vehicle do I want to put the time and effort into
7 being a part of or competing to be a member of that
8 pool? And that takes some effort to get there, and
9 then it's somewhat of a bet that their customer will
10 also go to that vehicle if that's the case.

11 So other things to consider would be on and
12 off-ramps. If they don't get business for a while, are
13 they automatically off? Is it possible to get on the
14 vehicle in some reasonable amount of time? And then,
15 also, would there be a bridge potentially from the
16 small business set-aside to a full-and-open
17 competition? Sometimes the full-and-open could be you
18 have to do every task expected or you can't compete,
19 whereas on the small business set-aside it may be you
20 can do a few of the tasks and participate that way.

21 So I just throw that out as something.
22 It's -- we're going to wrestle with, and it's part of
23 that sort of theme of consolidation and having good
24 supply chains, which has really gone over several of
25 the past -- and the current presidential

97	<p>1 administration.</p> <p>2 So another theme is simplification, where</p> <p>3 that's coming not only from the Administration but</p> <p>4 also from Congress for DOD in particular. You know,</p> <p>5 every -- the Congress in the last year's National</p> <p>6 Defense Authorization Act, established a panel to look</p> <p>7 at federal -- or defense acquisition regulations with</p> <p>8 the idea of simplifying them. That's called the 809</p> <p>9 panel. They're out, they're active right now. They're</p> <p>10 meeting. There's opportunity for public comment on</p> <p>11 that, so if anyone -- I'll just share that for your</p> <p>12 awareness.</p> <p>13 And then looking at this recognizing that</p> <p>14 we've got the category management challenge</p> <p>15 potentially, which could reduce the opportunities for</p> <p>16 small businesses. We're looking at the metrics</p> <p>17 associated with what if we raised the simplified</p> <p>18 acquisition threshold. Right now, it's \$150,000.</p> <p>19 Anything below that is set aside for simple acquisition</p> <p>20 procedures, meaning it's set aside for small</p> <p>21 businesses.</p> <p>22 For DOD, that translates to the \$8.4</p> <p>23 billion -- let me make sure I have my numbers straight</p> <p>24 -- of set-aside opportunity for small business at the</p> <p>25 150K level. So if you added up all the contracts from</p>	99	<p>1 readiness-type things, but a fair amount is going also</p> <p>2 to large systems.</p> <p>3 So what traditionally happens when DOD budgets</p> <p>4 go up, small business spending goes up, but the actual</p> <p>5 percentage goes down because we're buying ships and</p> <p>6 aircraft where there's more subcontracting perhaps</p> <p>7 going on or just a lot of that additional money goes to</p> <p>8 the other-than-small business category.</p> <p>9 And then just finally a reminder to everyone</p> <p>10 about cybersecurity, that the end of this year, 2017,</p> <p>11 there will be a DFARS clause in place that will require</p> <p>12 covered defense information to be safeguarded by</p> <p>13 implementing a number of information security</p> <p>14 requirements. So this applies both to prime and</p> <p>15 subcontractors.</p> <p>16 So we're concerned about the small business</p> <p>17 industrial base being able to handle this. You know,</p> <p>18 you have to do things like audit your systems, have</p> <p>19 two-factor authentication, something you carry,</p> <p>20 something you know, those sorts of things. And that's</p> <p>21 going to be part of the contracts with DOD when that</p> <p>22 type of information is involved. So that's a word to</p> <p>23 spread to folks out in the community to make sure</p> <p>24 they're aware of that and then posturing themselves if</p> <p>25 they're going to compete in those markets.</p>
98	<p>1 the Department of Defense that were \$150,000 or less,</p> <p>2 it would be \$8.4 billion that goes to small businesses</p> <p>3 -- I'm sorry, total for DOD and \$4.7 billion goes to</p> <p>4 small business. So it's around high 60 percentages,</p> <p>5 around 70 percent or so.</p> <p>6 If that was raised to a million and a half,</p> <p>7 say, you know, ten times increase, the opportunity --</p> <p>8 this is from FY16 -- would be about \$22.2 billion is</p> <p>9 what DOD spent if you added up all the contracts, \$1.5</p> <p>10 million and below. And about \$9.4 billion of that, so</p> <p>11 less than half, went to small businesses.</p> <p>12 So there may be a wedge of opportunity there</p> <p>13 where if we had higher simplified acquisition threshold</p> <p>14 procedures then there would be more opportunity for</p> <p>15 small businesses and see that sort of strategically as</p> <p>16 a fair tradeoff if we have to embrace category</p> <p>17 management and limit the pool on some of the higher</p> <p>18 value contracts, maybe we can increase the lower end of</p> <p>19 the spectrum for small businesses.</p> <p>20 Just a couple other points. You know, it's</p> <p>21 been a challenging year for most of the federal</p> <p>22 government for budgets. And, I mean, it's always --</p> <p>23 all of us have that challenge, but for DOD, we've been</p> <p>24 getting signals, hey, the more money is being put in</p> <p>25 the Department. A lot of it's going in towards</p>	100	<p>1 That's all I have. Thank you.</p> <p>2 MS. CARSON: Thank you. Do we have questions</p> <p>3 for Department of Defense at this time? Appreciate the</p> <p>4 great update.</p> <p>5 We are going to turn it over to Mr. Tom Loney,</p> <p>6 Department of Veteran Affairs.</p> <p>7 MR. LENEY: Good afternoon. I want to talk</p> <p>8 about five things. First of all, following up on what</p> <p>9 Dr. Galvin mentioned, the issue of category management</p> <p>10 with strategic sourcing initiatives and AbilityOne. It</p> <p>11 is has been made very clear on more than one occasion</p> <p>12 now that the Department of Veterans Affairs is pursuing</p> <p>13 and will continue to pursue and implement the Veterans</p> <p>14 First program.</p> <p>15 So what does this mean? This means that on</p> <p>16 the federal strategic sourcing initiative, we will only</p> <p>17 participate in federal strategic sourcing initiative</p> <p>18 procurements if there are two or more verified veteran-</p> <p>19 owned small businesses on this -- on the vehicle. If</p> <p>20 there are not, then we are not permitted to use the</p> <p>21 strategic sourcing vehicle.</p> <p>22 With regard to AbilityOne, there's a recent</p> <p>23 court case that was just -- that's just been</p> <p>24 adjudicated. And, again, the Department's guidance is</p> <p>25 that we will support Veterans First, and therefore</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">101</p> <p>1 AbilityOne is not considered a mandatory source for the 2 Department of Veterans Affairs. 3 So those are some good news stories for 4 veteran-owned small businesses in the face of a general 5 movement in the government towards strategic sourcing, 6 towards category management, et cetera. There's a 7 countervailing force, if you will. We are a very big 8 department. We -- our budget is also going up, and 9 contrary to many of the other departments in the 10 government. And, therefore, we're under a lot of 11 scrutiny about how we spend our money. 12 And, so, we are in the middle of a supply 13 chain transformation effort, and to -- when you have 14 166 medical centers, 800 community medical operations, 15 you're the biggest healthcare system in the country, 16 and you're not taking advantage of your scale, you're 17 not taking advantage of your ability to source 18 nationally, that becomes a really big problem. We have 19 got to be competitive with the private sector. 20 I believe -- and this is Tom Loney talking -- 21 the VA, as a healthcare system, faces an existential 22 threat of not being a healthcare system anymore. So 23 that puts a lot of pressure on the leadership of the VA 24 to make sure that we are a competitive healthcare 25 system providing the best care at a competitive price</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">103</p> <p>1 that's one of the biggest challenges for a veteran who 2 owns a business. Currently, unfortunately, in the 3 Veterans First program, we limit their access to 4 capital to debt financing. And that's -- and having 5 been in the business, having struggled with that, 6 that's not a great way to capitalize your business. So 7 we're taking this opportunity to look very hard at how 8 we can adjust the regulations to enable veteran owners 9 to get equity financing, to obtain equity financing 10 without losing control -- the reasonable levels of 11 control you would expect in the business world. 12 So I think we're probably within three months 13 of having a proposed rule on the street. Again, as 14 Bill said, we've got a lot of energy to get something 15 done, and I am very pleased to say there is no 16 significant opposition in coming up with something 17 good, so please be on the lookout for that proposal. 18 And, again, particularly from the veteran-owned small 19 business community, we want to hear from you on how it 20 affects particularly in the area of getting access to 21 equity capital. 22 In our process, we've had a 65 percent 23 increase in applications for our verification process, 24 which is good news and bad news. The good news is more 25 people are coming into the program; the bad news is our</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">102</p> <p>1 for all 9 million veterans who use it. So the supply 2 chain management is a big issue. 3 (Brief pause.) 4 MR. LONEY: So there's a lot of work going on 5 inside the VA to transform the supply chain, and that's 6 going to tend to move in the direction of 7 consolidation, in the direction of bundling. We are 8 taking a very close look at -- in each of those 9 situations to make sure that we can demonstrate through 10 the data -- not through intuition or anecdotes -- that 11 there is, in fact, savings going to be accrued to the 12 Department and therefore to the taxpayer. 13 The second -- the third thing I want to talk 14 about is verification. In NDAA 2017, there was a 15 requirement to establish a joint rule. We've been 16 working very closely with Ken Dodds' people. That's 17 been a very, I think, fruitful collaboration, and we 18 are on short final to a draft of joint rule about 19 ownership and control. Our goal in this is not just to 20 have a joint rule, because we already have a -- that 21 would be very easy. The challenge we've taken on is to 22 make the joint rule more in line with routine business 23 practices and, in particular, to enable the veterans 24 who own small businesses to get access to capital. 25 As Barb so eloquently stated earlier and John,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">104</p> <p>1 ability to handle the increase in the short term. But 2 we have a larger challenge. Currently, there are 3 10,000 -- about 10,500 firms in our Veterans First 4 program, which is good news, because that means it's a 5 very robust supply base for us as we implement the 6 Veterans First program. 7 But only 16 percent of the people in our 8 program do business with the VA. Approximately 25 9 percent of the firms in our program do business with 10 the federal government. And, so, two issues. There 11 are 45,000 firms -- veteran-owned small businesses -- 12 in SAM. We are seeing a significant uptick. We've 13 gone from 7,000 to 10,000 firms in our program. 14 There is considerable concern that the VA -- 15 two concerns. One, that the VA is facilitating free- 16 riders. In a word, we are helping them mitigate 17 perceived risk in using veteran-owned small businesses 18 by verifying that they're the real deal in terms of 19 ownership and control. But very few of them are 20 actually doing work with us, and I'll talk to that in 21 relation to market research. 22 So we are now -- as part of the OMB 23 modernization effort, we think the time has come for 24 the verification program to apply to the entire federal 25 government. That's a challenge. It's a big idea. But</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">105</p> <p>1 our concern is right now there are 8,100 veteran-owned 2 small businesses doing business with the federal 3 government; 2,500 of them are verified, so we know 4 they're owned and controlled by veterans. But that 5 means there's a significant number of firms that use 6 self-certification.</p> <p>7 The times have changed currently in the 8 veteran-owned small business world. And then in the 9 small business world, the SBA certifies women-owned, 10 HubZone, 8(a). The only group that's not subject to 11 any kind of a certification process in the federal 12 government are veteran-owned small businesses who do 13 business outside the VA. So you have a small group, 14 10,000, that is looked at very hard, and you have a 15 large group, 35,000, that aren't looked at all, and the 16 only requirement for them is to check a block in SAM.</p> <p>17 We think that that has an adverse effect on 18 the credibility and legitimacy of the veteran-owned 19 small business community. And given -- I will just 20 speak for the VA. Given the perceptions that program 21 management and contracting officers have in the VA, and 22 the importance they place on verification, we think 23 that -- there may be issues across the federal 24 government, but we are moving out onto the 25 modernization program to propose that verification --</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">107</p> <p>1 you. Okay?</p> <p>2 So what we have learned is direct access is 3 important. One of the challenges in the access program 4 that we seek to improve is people want to talk to 5 people who can help them. In the VA, and I'll just 6 speak for my agency, our program management and 7 contracting officers want to talk to people who can 8 help them. The challenge is not everybody who wants to 9 talk to them can help solve their problems.</p> <p>10 So we see the importance not only in our 11 agency but across the federal government of doing much 12 more sophisticated market research in order to mitigate 13 the perception of risk, why should I talk to, you know, 14 Vets R Us, Incorporated when I can talk to Lockheed 15 Martin? I've heard of Lockheed Martin. I've heard of 16 IBM. I haven't heard of Vets Like Us. So to mitigate 17 the risk and to generate the math so that people feel 18 that I'm spending my time well in talking to people 19 that can help me solve my problems.</p> <p>20 So we think that the verification is linked to 21 part of the veteran business experience, to the market 22 research, to the ability to gain direct access to the 23 customer. And we believe when we can link those three 24 things together, we will truly generate opportunities 25 for veteran-owned small business because what I know,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">106</p> <p>1 in order to enhance the credibility and the legitimacy 2 of what I think is the most -- I'm biased -- the most 3 important group, as my colleague says, an earned but 4 not a socioeconomic group. So I just want to alert you 5 to that.</p> <p>6 The VA is -- obviously, that will require -- 7 we're working with the SBA, we're working with OMB. 8 This is a -- this will require legislation at some 9 point. But in light of the OMB memorandum, in light of 10 changes we're seeing in this Administration and the 11 interest of the Administration, we think that is -- now 12 has some potential.</p> <p>13 The last piece I wanted to mention very 14 quickly is why this is so important, and the 15 demonstration we did on market research is in the time 16 I've spent inside the government, when I was at -- 17 well, when I was in business, the thing I needed most 18 was access to the customer. You don't do business 19 unless you have access to the customer.</p> <p>20 I know -- if any of you in the business field 21 have spent your time throwing unsolicited -- throwing 22 proposals across the transom with government customers 23 you have never met, never talked to, you just read a 24 solicitation on FBO, my question for you and the thing 25 I'd ask you to ask yourself, how is that working for</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">108</p> <p>1 and I think what we know, there are thousands of very, 2 very capable veteran-owned small businesses out there 3 who can help the federal government solve its problems.</p> <p>4 So that's what we are, in the course of the 5 next year, trying to put those three pieces together. 6 Verification is merely a means to mitigate perceived 7 risk. It's not an end unto itself. But in order to 8 preclude it from being an obstacle, we think we've got 9 -- the time has come not to shrink it but to expand it. 10 So this socioeconomic group is viewed as the group to 11 go to when you need help solving a problem.</p> <p>12 Thank you.</p> <p>13 MS. CARSON: Thank you, Mr. Leney. That 14 is quite a change, and many fruitful, meaningful 15 inputs. I think we will have some questions. Is 16 there anyone -- could you please come to the 17 microphone and identify yourself?</p> <p>18 MR. WEIDMAN: I know how hard it is for people 19 to hear me usually. My name is Rick Weidman, Vietnam 20 Veterans of America. And my question is really for Mr. 21 Galvin, Tom, and Ms. Carson. 106-50 passed in August 22 of 1999, August 17th, the President signed it, and it 23 became enacted. I still don't see anything for 24 subcontracting. And DOD said it's coming. SBA said 25 it's coming. And VA even took a bit of a stab at it.</p>

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1 When are we going to have staffs that are
2 reliable in all agencies, number one? And, number two,
3 for SBA, we need scrubbing of data. You'll just
4 collect whatever the agencies send, but nobody looks at
5 it to see if it makes any sense in particular so that
6 in going through that list you find subcontracts with
7 other Fortune 40 companies, by one, and it's counted as
8 small business or even service-disabled veteran small
9 business. And that we find really quite troubling.
10 And on a government-wide basis that what about subs.

11 And the second is to look at each agency in
12 regard to simplifying acquisition. Are they using it,
13 particularly on things that are \$100,000 or less? And
14 that's what impacts on the majority of small
15 businesses. When you study the census, you'll see that
16 many are micro business or very small business. And,
17 so, I would be interested if you could -- if you could
18 address those things.

19 And last but not least, 2004, President Bush
20 signed an executive order having to do with veteran-
21 owned small business. And in that, the chief operating
22 officer of each agency and department was mandated to
23 be the person to coordinate things within that
24 department or agency. Why? Because they are the line
25 authority. OSDUBUs, no matter how good they are, and

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1 many of them are very good, they don't have any line
2 authority. But the deputy secretary or the deputy
3 administrator does.

4 So the question is this body is the one that
5 should be recommending to the White House, either they
6 implement the one that's on the books, or that
7 President Trump reissue it, maybe making it even
8 stronger. And, so, I would like some comment on all
9 those, if possible. Thank you.

10 MS. CARSON: Thank you, Mr. Weidman. Okay, I
11 appreciate that. We do -- I'm going to ask for a pause
12 because we -- the open period of questions is for each
13 agency, what they just presented on. We do have a
14 public comment period coming, and we actually had some
15 people RSVP with their questions as well. So I'm going
16 to save it for that time.

17 For those of you who are looking at time and
18 wondering will we get through it, we are going to run a
19 little bit behind. I'm asking my agency partners if
20 you can commit to giving me just ten extra minutes,
21 please, this one time. It's been good conversation,
22 and I want to answer the questions that we've gotten.
23 So those of you on the phone, please plan to stay with
24 us just a little longer.

25 So I think I've taken notes on your questions,

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1 Mr. Weidman, and we will address them shortly. So we
2 are going to move to General Services Administration.

3 MR. ARRIETA: Well, thank you, guys. My name
4 is Jose Arrieta. I am the Director of IT70, which is a
5 large contract vehicle within the General Services
6 Administration. It's a \$15.2 billion contract vehicle.
7 It's the largest contract vehicle in the world. We
8 have somewhere over 4,750 suppliers, and the number
9 changes every day. So we can never be approximate with
10 the number.

11 And we are offering services like software,
12 hardware, IT services overall. We have a specific kind
13 of offering in health IT, a specific offering in
14 continuous diagnostics and mitigation services, which
15 is a cyber-oriented offering. We have a cyber IT
16 service offering; we have a large offering in cloud.

17 So what I wanted to talk to you today is about
18 how we're trying to kind of bridge the gap between
19 agency partners and small business owners -- small and
20 large business owners, but business in general. And I
21 think it's directly applicable to this conversation.
22 So if you look at IT70, one of the benefits that we
23 have as a full-and-open multiple award schedule, IDIQ,
24 is we can onboard companies at any time.

25 But if you know anything about the history of

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1 70 and the multiple award schedule program, it takes
2 many days to onboard companies. So one of the things
3 that we've done is we've created a program called Fast
4 Lane. Now, we pitch Fast Lane to companies as this is
5 how you can get on our contract vehicle very fast, but
6 I think there's a bigger picture to that.

7 And when we're looking at servicing a customer
8 agency like Tom at VA or we're looking to service DHA
9 for their health IT needs, what we can do is we can
10 actually create an offering, like our health IT SIN,
11 and we can onboard companies that can compete in that
12 space within 34 days.

13 When we started the program off, we were at
14 110 days to onboard a company, small or large. Now we
15 can do it in a 34-day period of time. So we can --
16 when we talk about opening a market like health IT for
17 DHA for the Department of Health Affairs, one of the
18 things we can do is we can say, look, here are the
19 services that DHA needs; we're going to create a
20 special item number; and we're going to create some
21 terms and conditions and a competition to just onboard
22 companies that have experience doing that work. And we
23 can bring you onto the contract within 33, 34 days,
24 specifically to support anybody that has a health IT
25 services need across the federal government. We can

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1 create depth in the marketplace very rapidly, and we
 2 can tailor terms and conditions so that they can
 3 service an agency's need.
 4 They have to think about that, right, because
 5 we offered IT services for a long period of time, and
 6 many small companies and large companies would argue
 7 that, look, health IT exists in your schedule contract
 8 offering. But the world has shifted, guys. The world
 9 has shifted. There's automated machine learning.
 10 There's artificial intelligence. There's autonomous
 11 systems. A lot of organizations are moving into the
 12 block-chain platform, which I have a huge interest in
 13 as well.
 14 So how do we segment the marketplace so
 15 customer agencies can see that capability and so the
 16 companies that have that capability can actually offer
 17 it to federal agencies? So it's very important that
 18 you understand how IT70 can be a tool for customer
 19 agencies that are looking for solutions and for
 20 industry partners that are solution providers or
 21 solution aggregators and they're not just reselling
 22 software or hardware, which we do as well, right? So
 23 we offer that as well.
 24 Now, the other thing that I wanted to talk
 25 about, I was taking some notes on kind of what was

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1 said, so I'm kind of skewing away from the slides, but
 2 I think it's important. There was a lot of talk about
 3 category management, and I think Jim brought up MD-
 4 1722, if I'm remembering the memo correctly.
 5 You know, and if you look at MD-1722, I
 6 thought the Administration made a specific focus on
 7 three areas. They mentioned category management as a
 8 good thing; they talked about emerging tech; and they
 9 specifically called out artificial intelligence,
 10 automated machine learning, autonomous systems and the
 11 block-chain platform as an area of focus for the
 12 federal government for opportunities.
 13 And they talked about GWACs, which are
 14 government-wide acquisition contracts that we offer at
 15 GSA; and they talked about Federal Supply Schedules,
 16 which is -- I am the largest piece of the Federal
 17 Supply Schedule program. We're over half of the total
 18 business value. And they said these will be tools for
 19 use. And I think it's important to understand that
 20 when you look at our vehicle, we do well over -- well
 21 over 35 percent of the volume that goes through our
 22 vehicle at any given year goes to small business.
 23 Now, being the former OSDBU of the Treasury
 24 and helping to create the new small business goals that
 25 are being implemented here in 2017, when I look at our

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1 portfolio, we would be an A-plus as a portfolio from a
 2 small business perspective. And from a vets
 3 perspective, about 5 percent of the 15 billion goes
 4 directly to veteran-owned small companies, and if you
 5 look back at last year, it was about \$708 million.
 6 This year, we're trending a little bit above that
 7 number, and we're very close to \$600 million at, you
 8 know, to date, like a week ago when they kind of pulled
 9 the numbers on this.
 10 So it's important to understand that not only
 11 are we shifting our vehicle to open markets quickly, to
 12 service customer agencies, but we're also a great tool
 13 for agencies to do set-asides for small businesses of
 14 any category that you may want to do business with.
 15 And across the federal government, I think from an
 16 educational perspective, this is something kind of new
 17 for us, for the multiple award schedule program, and I
 18 don't know that a lot of customer agencies understand
 19 how to use that. And we're going to push into that
 20 pretty hard.
 21 I wanted to kind of call out a couple of other
 22 things that we're working on, and I'm just going to
 23 touch on them quickly because I know we're out of time
 24 and I don't want to monopolize all the time here. But
 25 we worked on a plain language road map, real simple

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1 instructions on how to get on IT70. It's one of the
 2 ways that we made the process faster.
 3 We started something called Startup
 4 Springboard. Look, if you don't have a lot of
 5 experience -- if you have a lot of experience, excuse
 6 me, but you don't have two years of corporate
 7 experience, we'll evaluate your personal experience to
 8 bring you on as a small business owner. It's something
 9 we didn't do before.
 10 And then, you know, for those of you that are
 11 interested, and I think this is where there's
 12 significant opportunities, we're redesigning our cloud
 13 send, and when we look at what we do in terms of cloud,
 14 we do somewhere between \$650 and 700 million in cloud
 15 services. We have a cloud SIN now. It's just for
 16 cloud brokerage or cloud offerings through a systems
 17 integrator.
 18 But, look, if you know how agencies implement
 19 cloud, you know they do IV -- independent validation
 20 and verification. They do a test and development
 21 environment, where they typically enter into a
 22 production environment and they roll over into O&M.
 23 And there's opportunities for small businesses in each
 24 of those spaces -- veteran-owned small businesses as
 25 well. So we're looking at that offering and we're

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1 trying to target it so that if you're a customer agency
 2 and you need O&M support, or you need DevOps, or you
 3 need some IV&V, we actually have all of that related to
 4 cloud in one space so you can find it.
 5 Right now, it's spread out across -- all over
 6 the place, and it's very hard to do business with us.
 7 We think that that will also drive a number of
 8 opportunities, especially when you take into account
 9 Fast Lane, for us to connect agencies with small
 10 businesses that have the ability to perform.
 11 I talked a little bit about health IT, so I
 12 won't circle back there unless someone has a question.
 13 I'll talk about highly adaptive cybersecurity
 14 services, which is our cyber offering. We haven't seen
 15 a ton of volume on it. It's just been live since right
 16 before the end of -- of Fiscal Year '16 it went live.
 17 Probably around 6, 7 million in business on that. What
 18 we're offering there is a suite -- and it's mostly
 19 small businesses. It's a suite of offerings where you
 20 can do penetration testing on your network, where you
 21 can fix any holes that you find in penetration testing,
 22 where you can do an analysis.
 23 So if I'm the U.S. Treasury and I think that -
 24 - and I'm not saying this is the case -- if I'm a
 25 business and I think that the general ledger of my

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1 business may be weak, I can bring in a company to do
 2 penetration testing on the general ledger and develop
 3 recommendations for how I can fix it. That's what our
 4 cybersecurity SIN is offering from a service
 5 perspective. It -- we are -- we also are working on
 6 something called continuous diagnostics and mitigation
 7 SIN. And right now, we have a BPA.
 8 Tom's heard about this, all in bunch, but we
 9 have a BPA for continuous diagnostics and mitigation.
 10 It does about \$900 million in business. And we are
 11 opening the aperture on that, and we're creating a
 12 special item number. Why are we doing that? We're
 13 seeing an explosion in private sector expenditure
 14 focused on cybersecurity products. And we want to take
 15 advantage of that capability and onboard those
 16 companies so that they can provide service to federal
 17 agencies.
 18 The way we're currently structured, we do
 19 business on our BPA through 17 BPA holders, and those
 20 BPA holders are required to go out and bring different
 21 products or services into the marketplace. We did that
 22 to start with because it allowed us to shape the
 23 marketplace, get an understanding of what exists. But
 24 if you look at how the banking industry has pushed into
 25 the cybersecurity market hard core, one of the things

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1 you're seeing is a massive explosion, and the banking
 2 industry as a whole will be the largest spender in the
 3 cybersecurity space in the next two to three years.
 4 We want to take advantage of that opportunity
 5 and we want to onboard those companies and allow for
 6 direct access. It's predominantly driven by small
 7 companies that have developed a unique solution from a
 8 cybersecurity products perspective, and companies that
 9 are evolving as automated machine learning, artificial
 10 intelligence, autonomous systems, providers of cyber
 11 tools.
 12 So, you know, just something to be aware of.
 13 And we're also pushing into something called Earth
 14 Observation, and we see a significant amount of
 15 opportunities for small business here. I'm going to
 16 give you an example because it's the easiest way to
 17 describe what it is. If you'd think about the Boston
 18 Marathon bombing and you think about, you know, how did
 19 we get the picture of the Tsarnaev brothers, at a
 20 really high level, what we did is we dropped an
 21 electronic pin down on the region 20-mile radius. We
 22 went back 20 minutes in time.
 23 We pulled -- and how do we find out where the
 24 explosion took off? From satellite feed. We took all
 25 the video feed from the security cameras in the area.

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1 All text message and cell phones, we pulled all that
 2 data, we did a full-blown, and any text messages that
 3 were shared across the network. And we did a full-blow
 4 analysis on that with an adaptive analytics platform,
 5 and we said who was around the bombing area with a
 6 bookbag? Who made a text message or a phone call
 7 sometime right before it happened? And we were able to
 8 get two pictures and say, look, these guys are the
 9 suspects, you know, that we think may have been behind
 10 this.
 11 You can see how that type of technology can be
 12 used for erosion across the eastern seaboard or maybe
 13 something in the Antarctic. So when we talk about
 14 Earth Observation, we're talking about that capability.
 15 That marketplace has exploded over the last couple of
 16 years. Before, you could get a subscription provider
 17 that could give you a picture of a coastline, you know,
 18 once a month from a satellite upfeed. Now we can do it
 19 in realtime.
 20 We're talking about dynamic analytics. We can
 21 do it on a second-to-second basis. We can pull in
 22 social media data. We can pull in phone -- you know,
 23 phone calls. We can pull in text messages. We can
 24 pull in satellite feeds, and we can do it -- and, so,
 25 we've created a space called Earth Observation where

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1 we're going to onboard companies that are evolving in
 2 that space and they can provide that service, and we
 3 see a significant amount of opportunity there.
 4 If you're wondering how do we do this, we
 5 directly engaged the business community, and we asked
 6 them, do you think this is a good idea? In the case of
 7 the two newest SINs, continuous diagnostics and
 8 mitigation and Earth Observation, when we surveyed the
 9 business community, we got well over 75, 80 percent of
 10 the people said this was a fantastic idea and this fit
 11 with the direction of the market.
 12 So I wanted to talk about one other thing,
 13 because my friend Duane here, from the OSDDBU office at
 14 GSA, and I decided to partner up on this. When I was
 15 an OSDDBU and working with -- and torturing Tom and Ken,
 16 I started to look at the issue of doing business with
 17 the federal government. And one of the things that we
 18 did at Treasury, and we're going to try to deploy
 19 through the IT70 portfolio, which is very large.
 20 And, so, we said, look, not only do we have to
 21 help them identify business opportunities, not only do
 22 we have to give them access to capital, but we have to
 23 talk to companies about how they can invest in
 24 themselves to actually grow their business. It's not
 25 enough just to win work or identify work; how do you

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1 grow your business? How do you actually target
 2 business opportunities so if you're a \$2 million
 3 company -- a year revenue company or you're a \$100,000-
 4 a-year revenue company, you're not chasing a \$10
 5 million deal that you're never going to win because you
 6 can never scale. How do we show them that although
 7 there may be 5,000 opportunities across the United
 8 States if they're a Virginia-based company?
 9 Strategically it's probably important to focus on
 10 Virginia, DC, and Maryland.
 11 How do we teach them how to create a pipeline,
 12 and then when they win work, how do we show them to
 13 reinvest some of that capital in their business so that
 14 they can scale. A lot of small companies these days,
 15 you know what they do to scale? They take a little bit
 16 off the top; they reinvest it in their own payroll
 17 system out of a CAWD environment. And what do they
 18 become? They become a managed service payroll provider
 19 to themselves.
 20 That's a core capability that they can offer
 21 to a federal agency, and they're not paying a larger
 22 company to provide that service, not in realtime, which
 23 gives them more flexibility for delivering value. And
 24 that's how you build a company. So we're partnered
 25 with the OSDDBU folks at GSA, and we're going to take

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1 and refine these ten different courses or eight
 2 different courses -- I can't remember how many we
 3 created.
 4 We're going to refine them, and we're going to
 5 start to offer that to -- as it relates to IT70, and I
 6 think the OSDDBU folks at GSA are going to offer it more
 7 broadly to share with the small business community, and
 8 I think it's something that, you know, I just wanted to
 9 mention as it may be of interest to you.
 10 So I'm pretty sure -- oh, the last thing. You
 11 know, when we talk about category management -- and for
 12 those of you that remember me in my other role, you
 13 remember that I had feelings about category management
 14 that were very clear. One of the interesting things
 15 that I think that we haven't talked about enough with
 16 category management and I think it's super important is
 17 if you get out of the business of looking at it as an
 18 approach to strategic sourcing and you get into the --
 19 and you get into the mindset of looking at it as -- and
 20 look at an entire marketplace, then you start to see
 21 where different opportunities exist.
 22 And I'll use the example of DOD. If anybody
 23 did the research and looked at what DOD's spending on
 24 automated machine learning, artificial intelligence and
 25 autonomous systems and now a little bit in the block-

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1 chain space, you'd see a significant market opportunity
 2 for small business. If you're not looking at -- if
 3 you're not able to look at the category as a whole
 4 across the whole space, you would not see that. So
 5 there are some benefits to category management.
 6 We focused on strategic sourcing and lower
 7 costs, but if we look at the vertical as a whole, we
 8 can actually segment the marketplace pretty accurately,
 9 and we can identify opportunities for small business,
 10 and that's kind of in my role at IT70 what I'm trying
 11 to do. And you'll see us make a big push into
 12 automated machine learning, artificial intelligence,
 13 autonomous systems and the block-chain platform because
 14 of that.
 15 So that's all --
 16 MR. GAVINO: And in support of category
 17 management also GSA is walking its own talk. We have
 18 reorganized, realigned to support such an endeavor,
 19 exactly what he said. It used to be -- for example,
 20 I'm the Director of the Network Services program, now
 21 called telecommunications. There were 11 directors;
 22 now there's only one.
 23 Why? Well, now I have visibility of data that
 24 the directors used to have and operating independently
 25 with that data. Data is knowledge; knowledge is power.

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1 I now know basically what kind of communication systems
2 is being bought, CONUS-wide, what, when, where, how,
3 why from different regions in the United States. I
4 have that data, and I use that data basically to save
5 the government money.

6 So it's not just -- it's not just we're saying
7 category management is a good thing. We're actually
8 realigned to support such that endeavor.

9 MR. ARRIETA: And not to monopolize the time,
10 but just to build on what Armando's saying, you know,
11 and Jim, I'm jumping into the duties basically here a
12 little but, but I love this. You know, if you look at
13 -- there's a group called MD5 within DOD, and they're
14 looking at the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the United
15 States.

16 And if I wasn't looking at the IT services
17 marketplace as a category, as a vertical, I would never
18 even know that that marketplace exists. Now that I
19 know that marketplace exists, it's like, well, how are
20 you investing in the entrepreneurial ecosystem and what
21 is your strategy? Are you working through
22 universities? Are you working directly with companies?

23 And then as a -- as an organization that's
24 focused on that category, I could say, well, here's
25 some tools so that you can have access to those

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1 companies easily. Those companies can onboard rapidly,
2 and then you could start -- you can offer this to the
3 entire federal government. So there are some good --
4 there are some good things with it that I think we're
5 working on and I think the reorganization supports, and
6 I think we're pretty excited about.

7 MS. CARSON: Thank you. That was incredible.
8 And we do hope that you'll come back in September with
9 some of the ways that as you roll things out that are
10 available for business owners to participate in and
11 learn from, we obviously -- our role as SBA is to get
12 that -- our network out there and sharing that with
13 folks. So we look forward to hearing how we can do
14 that aspect for you through out veteran business
15 outreach centers and others.

16 MR. ARRIETA: And I would offer one of the
17 things that Armando has -- you know, Armando's super-
18 passionate about those things, by the way, and he drove
19 me here, and he said no lunch, no soda, no water. I
20 need you here the whole time. And I'm glad he did.
21 This has been a really cool meeting to sit through.

22 But we are working on refining kind of this
23 training offering, and we found a really young,
24 motivated guy that's passionate about public service
25 that I think will deliver it well, and we'd be more

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1 than happy to work through the veteran business centers
2 of this group to kind of deliver as much of that as we
3 can.

4 MS. CARSON: We'll have some things in mind
5 for certain. Okay, again, we are spending a little
6 extra time. This can't go on all afternoon, though, so
7 we're going to move fairly rapidly. It's 4:00, and I'm
8 turning it over to my colleague who I believe is on the
9 Phone, Matthew Blum from the Office of Management and
10 Budget.

11 MR. BLUM: Thanks, Barb. I appreciate it, and
12 I'll be brief. I did want to offer one addendum for
13 the conversation on category management. Jose makes an
14 excellent point about, you know, the need to think not
15 just vertically but about the market as a whole and the
16 opportunities, you know, that exist well beyond the
17 specific areas where there has been category management
18 placed.

19 But speaking tactically for just a minute, and
20 I probably need to do a better job in communicating
21 with folks on this, is even within those areas where
22 there are category management plans on desktops,
23 laptops, on -- and whatnot, most of the migration
24 anticipates a chunk, a significant chunk, that will --
25 that will not vibrate and remain open for open market

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1 activity.

2 I don't remember the exact percentages, for
3 example, on desktops and laptops, but my point is that
4 we're not talking in all instances from moving from,
5 you know, a very small amount of use affecting
6 contracts to 100 percent. That wouldn't be realistic
7 or practical, and it would create incredible market
8 disruption for small and large business.

9 So, again, I think that as we -- as we roll
10 out these initiatives, it is important for us to pause
11 and make sure that all members of the community and our
12 small businesses and vets understand what the
13 strategies are and the many opportunities that remain
14 for small businesses, in addition to the many small
15 businesses that are category managers breaking into the
16 vehicles that are being used for these purposes.

17 And to put it another way, there is no relief
18 for agencies with respect to their small business
19 goaling. And that perhaps is kind of the most
20 fundamental point. We don't see this initiative as
21 playing against or changing in any way any of the
22 obligations that we expect agencies to pursue and to
23 have reflected on their score cards that Ken described
24 earlier and meeting, you know, all aspects of their
25 small business goaling.

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1 Just very briefly on a few initiatives that
 2 we've been working on. I think they mostly tie to 3.2
 3 of our task force recommendations on reducing barriers
 4 to growth and improving coordination. Three points
 5 very briefly. One, you've heard me speak in past
 6 meetings about our interest in innovation, which
 7 happily -- happy to report is shared by the Office of
 8 American Innovation in the White House, and we are
 9 taking a broad view to this, so in our minds, this
 10 isn't just about, you know, teaching shiny new
 11 technology. It is much broader about improving the
 12 responsiveness of our acquisition system.

13 At the end of the day, you know, that's what
 14 customers expect. They want the work, the services
 15 that are delivered to be in a timely manner to meet
 16 program and citizen needs. And our contractors equally
 17 demand that as we -- our processes be responsive and
 18 that we value their time as well. We've heard
 19 repeatedly many, many contractors, including small
 20 businesses, say that, you know, they'll bid on
 21 something and it seems like it takes an inordinate
 22 amount of time in some cases to hear back. And, you
 23 know, on the services side, in particular.

24 And we need to emphasize those practices that
 25 help us not only to be more innovative but, frankly, to

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1 be more modernized in our everyday behavior, whether it
 2 is, you know, better use of prototypes or oral
 3 presentations, taking appropriate advantage of Agile
 4 and recognizing, for example, that many 8(a)
 5 contractors and other businesses -- veteran-owned small
 6 businesses and whatnot -- that have the ability to do
 7 Agile we need to tap into those capabilities.

8 Mr. Weidman mentioned a few minutes ago that
 9 we should not be ignoring or overlooking any and every
 10 opportunity. Take advantage of simplified acquisition
 11 procedures and recognize the transaction costs that
 12 make it harder to participate when we fail to leverage
 13 those -- you know, those simplified procedures. And
 14 what we plan to do is before we have our next quarterly
 15 meeting is meet with the -- Ken's group, the SBPAC.

16 We believe that many of the activities that
 17 we're talking about here and plays and practices to be
 18 more responsive, you know, very much aligned with what
 19 our small business directors and OSDBUs think about on
 20 a daily basis. So we want to not only compare notes
 21 but also make sure that the -- those innovative
 22 practices which we've talked about today and in past
 23 meetings are also incorporated into our work as we go
 24 about communities in practice and also our innovation
 25 hallway.

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1 Also wanted to point out on the legislative
 2 side, we continue to hold out hope -- sometimes things
 3 take longer than -- and take lots of conversations and
 4 patience, but we continue to push for many of the same
 5 reasons some of the authorities that we've talked about
 6 -- raising the simplified acquisition threshold, making
 7 some refinements to the processes that we use before we
 8 apply new requirements to commercial items. In fact,
 9 we can make it a little bit harder to make sure that
 10 we're looking as carefully as we can at the burden
 11 before we impose a new unique requirement on a company
 12 that is selling us a commercial-off-the-shelf product
 13 or service.

14 So we have developed a legislative proposal
 15 around that that we think will be helpful in this
 16 regard. And with also just -- very briefly mention if
 17 you aren't aware of it, Congressman Thornberry had
 18 introduced legislation, the Defense Acquisition
 19 Streamlining and Transparency Act, which has a
 20 provision to encourage or facilitate greater use of
 21 online and online marketplace. And the Administration
 22 has not taken a position on that, but it might be of
 23 interest to members of the task force just to take a
 24 look at it.

25 Based on what I have read, you might look at

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1 this as a conversation of trying to meet contractors
 2 where they are, right, and in the context of the online
 3 marketplace, this is trying to recognize that the
 4 government should, you know, be able to access
 5 providers of COTS products, that they would sell them
 6 through platforms, commercially existing platforms to
 7 their commercial customers.

8 So I think this will trigger a lot of dialogue
 9 within the community that I think will be healthy and
 10 informative as we think more broadly to how we make
 11 progress in reducing barriers to growth. And, again,
 12 I'm not offering a opinion today, good or bad, on that
 13 proposal, but just noting that we are getting from a
 14 lot of directions, you know, interest and looking very
 15 hard at the burden that we are imposing on our partners
 16 that do business with us contractually, which we take
 17 very seriously.

18 And lastly on that very point, you know, on
 19 the regulatory side, as you saw since our last meeting,
 20 Congress had under the Congressional Review Act,
 21 repealed the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces rule that the
 22 FAR council had codified at the end of the last
 23 Administration. And there was a lot of discussion of
 24 the very significant burdens that were associated with
 25 that rulemaking. And under the Trump executive orders,

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1 we are, you know, working to carefully review existing
2 regulatory requirements, especially those that have a
3 significant amount of burden to think about ways that,
4 you know, we can, you know, refine, modify those --
5 those rules.

6 And, also, I think, and maybe we can in a
7 future meeting, Barb, have further discussion on this,
8 but look at tools, nonregulatory tools, that can be
9 used to help reduce burden and eliminate the need in
10 the future when there's a problem or a kneejerk
11 reaction to regulate in order to address when a problem
12 goes wrong.

13 So these are examples, and, again, I'm not
14 necessarily endorsing a particular tool, but the
15 Defense Industry Initiative on Business Ethics and
16 Conduct developed a small business toolkit to provide
17 guidance to small businesses on how to design,
18 implement, and augment their ethics and conduct
19 compliance programs with a number of very simple steps
20 that could be taken, you know, for companies
21 recognizing they don't have the overhead of a large
22 defense contractor to do the sorts of things that large
23 businesses may do.

24 In the trafficking space, there's a
25 responsible sourcing tool that similarly is designed to

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1 provide us cases and information on how to be -- you
2 know, how to take steps to come into compliance with
3 obligations there. And I know at a prior meeting our
4 good defense colleagues talked about some of the
5 materials that have been shared to help small
6 businesses that are, you know, working in the
7 cyberspace or maybe to take steps to make sure that
8 they are cybersafe, if you will.

9 So that's the -- these tools are, I think, an
10 important part of our conversation, especially with
11 small businesses and perhaps we will get that request
12 to add that to the agenda when we meet with the SBPAC.

13 MS. CARSON: Thank you, Matthew. There are a
14 number of things that it sounds like would be good
15 topics for the SBPAC, the Small Business Procurement
16 Advisory Council.

17 MR. BLUM: That's right.

18 MS. CARSON: So that does meet once a month.
19 It is not public, but I do want those who may not fully
20 get everything addressed to know that we've noted
21 several topics that are appropriate for that venue as
22 they're OSDDBUs from the federal agencies.

23 So we're moving rapidly to the Department of
24 Treasury. Mr. Tim Colon, are you still on the line?

25 (No response.)

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1 MS. CARSON: Hearing nothing, I'm moving to
2 Victor, Vietnam Veterans of America.

3 MR. KLINGELHOFER: I only wanted to say one
4 sentence, and that's that I am increasingly convinced
5 that government-wide verification of SDVOSBs is
6 absolutely required.

7 MS. CARSON: I don't want to rush you. You're
8 a member. Is there anything else you'd like to say,
9 sir?

10 MR. KLINGELHOFER: No.

11 MS. CARSON: Okay.

12 MR. KLINGELHOFER: I think that Rick's
13 questions...

14 MS. CARSON: Okay, thank you.

15 And the Military Officers Association of
16 America, unfortunately, could not be with us today.
17 They're a member, but I know that they are listening
18 and participating perhaps in the room, so thank you for
19 that. But we would like to hear from the American
20 Legion. Go ahead, Mr. Phipps.

21 MR. PHIPPS: I'll just go -- I'll quickly
22 review a -- our VBOC visit and I'll just -- some quick
23 highlights. This VBOC in Springfield has other -- they
24 have SBC there. I think that there's a women's
25 business center there. They have a really cool

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1 collaboration, and they're able to leverage all those
2 other resources and those other -- those other tools
3 that they have at that center to really kind of be a
4 force multiplier. That's something that we were --
5 that we're going to follow up and look into to find out
6 why they're so successful compared to maybe other VBOCs
7 in the area.

8 A special note, they are using different CRMs,
9 so there's a lot of chaos on the back end in terms of
10 sharing data about small businesses, how to leverage
11 that small business among other VBOCs. I mean, I know
12 there's some sort of initiative to common -- to make
13 the common CRM, but I'm not sure on that. You know,
14 that seemed to be an issue there.

15 How they're funded is also not very clear, so
16 we're going to have some questions about how the
17 funding works when they interact with all that, because
18 there could be a really special recipe there for how
19 they do -- for how they do business.

20 Quickly, the American Legion is -- has made
21 comments on four bills to improve training at the VA,
22 to contracting officers, ensure veteran participation,
23 to the VA Procurement Efficiency Transportation Act and
24 Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act. I
25 won't go into all those, but those -- we can send those

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1 to the committee. Quick note, the ACVBA annual report
2 was submitted, and maybe we can share it with this
3 committee to see what our recommendations were on the
4 ACVBA, so everybody can take a quick look at that.

5 And I just wanted to hit really quick on a --
6 on the verification process. I think we need to take a
7 look at -- there's only 1,600 companies, approximately,
8 that are doing business in the federal government,
9 probably in terms of --

10 MR. KLINGELHOFER: In the VA.

11 MR. PHIPPS: In the VA that have been
12 certified. I know there -- I don't know if the SBA has
13 chimed in onto this -- you know, the CBE should apply
14 government-wide, but I think we really need to take a
15 hard look at that before just making that --

16 MR. KLINGELHOFER: That's one of our goals.
17 Yes, that's one of our goals this year is to address
18 that issue.

19 MR. PHIPPS: Excellent. And, so, that's --
20 I'll just wrap up from there.

21 MS. CARSON: I think we need a longer meeting
22 next time, because we do have some substantive input to
23 provide again on CBE particularly. OMB is addressing a
24 specific recommendation as well to reduce barriers and
25 increase the use of tools that are helpful to small

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1 businesses. So we will look closely at the agenda on
2 that.

3 Our last member was the Street Shares
4 Foundation. He had to drop off the line, but we did
5 hear from Mark Rockefeller earlier today. There was
6 one small business who did request an opportunity to
7 comment and provided their comments in advance, so we
8 really do have only a couple minutes for Link
9 Technologies, so I would like you to come on up.

10 But I want to address Mr. Weidman. I do have
11 your questions, and I may have to provide answers to
12 you outside this venue, but two of them at least are
13 going to be worked on by the Small Business Procurement
14 Advisory Committee -- Council, pardon. And I will be
15 in touch with you also personally to make sure that I
16 understand exactly what you were looking for and will
17 report out publicly in the September meeting as well.

18 On that, I appreciate that. One last plug on
19 the meeting tomorrow, the Advisory Committee on Veteran
20 Business Affairs is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and
21 it's the first time in many years that we have had on
22 the record veteran service organizations come in the
23 afternoon from 1:00 to about 3:30 to talk to us on
24 three specific topics: the GI Bill use, just the pilot
25 of it, what it would look like if the GI Bill were

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1 allowed to be used for small business from the start;
2 any comments at all on federal procurement, and also
3 entrepreneurial development programs. So we do have
4 some -- including Vietnam Veterans of America, Student
5 Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the
6 American Legion, as well as the Institute for Veterans
7 and Military Families. I know I'm missing some, but if
8 you want --

9 AMY: One Vet at a Time.

10 MS. CARSON: One Vet at a Time, which is
11 particularly interested in the GI Bill. So this is a
12 good opportunity for different points of view
13 absolutely to be on the record together and have a
14 chance for a face-to-face conversation. So I really
15 hope that if you are able you can come and join us on
16 that.

17 So, now, for just a couple minutes, sir, I'm
18 going to invite you to join us. Please identify
19 yourself.

20 MR. SILLS: Thank you so much, Barbara. I'm
21 very grateful to have a moment to offer the
22 perspectives of Link Resources and, in fact, other
23 service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. My
24 name is Charles Sills, and I'm head of FED/Contracting,
25 Fed Contracting, LLC, and also government contracting

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1 advisor to Link Resources. And I'm standing in today
2 for the CEO of Link Resources, Kirk Belmont, who could
3 not be here today. I'm going to cut what I was going
4 to say by about two-thirds, just to fit in the time.

5 Let me note that some of you may have seen
6 Link's email to the Task Force requesting this moment
7 to respectfully provide our input. It was quite
8 pointed. Those of you who have served in the military,
9 in particular those in combat, understand that our job
10 is to be direct and to the point while being
11 respectful.

12 Link Resources is indeed very frustrated.
13 Link has been vocal for several years, expressing our
14 concerns for SDVOSBs that are proactively excluded from
15 bidding on a majority of small federal projects for
16 which they may be otherwise qualified in favor of 8(a)
17 companies and large businesses. And we're specifically
18 talking about the Department of Energy in this context.

19 Link was founded 23 years ago by veterans, and
20 since 2011, is an SDVOSB certified by the rigorous VA
21 CBE process, yet the last Department of Energy set-
22 aside for SDVOSB companies in any way in our primary
23 NAICS code, engineering services, was in November 2012.
24 And Link was awarded that contract in March 2013, but
25 since 2012, there have been zero set-asides for

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1 SDVOSBs, yet there have been well over 400 Department
2 of Energy set-asides for 8(a) companies in engineering
3 services.

4 The intent of the law pertaining to 8(a)
5 firms, of course, is to help socially disadvantaged
6 categories. But this does not mean that three should
7 be an across-the-board 8(a) first program to exclude
8 other small business categories. At least this is what
9 we believe, and it's very difficult to do business or
10 win any contracts if you're not even allowed to bid on
11 them.

12 So I'm just going to quickly say 82 percent of
13 all Department of Energy funds targeted to
14 socioeconomic groups as set-asides go to 8(a)
15 companies, and given the current trend, within ten
16 years, this could well be 100 percent. In FY 2015,
17 there were 1,595 8(a) set-asides across all NAICS codes
18 in the Department of Energy, but only 88 compared to
19 1,595 for SDVOSBs.

20 I just want to read, in closing, a statement
21 from Kirk Belmont, Link Resources CEO. In his words,
22 "I am a combat infantryman having served 12 months in
23 Baghdad with over 120 missions outside the wire, and as
24 a service-disabled veteran, I have seen the promise to
25 support the troops consistently broken by federal

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1 agencies, Congress, and even more proactively in recent
2 years by the DOE, unfortunately, rationalized in favor
3 of 8(a) companies. And we have terrific respect for
4 all categories, socioeconomically, racially,
5 geographically, ethically in the 8(a) program, but we
6 don't think it should be just an 8(a) first situation.
7 And service-disabled veterans, as we've heard before,
8 are the only socioeconomic category that has earned
9 rights in the federal procurement system."

10 And Kirk finishes by saying, "I fought next to
11 soldiers of every race, color, heritage, and
12 orientation. Our differences did not divide us, but if
13 you would have told us after a difficult day in the
14 field that when and if we returned home our status as
15 veterans would be materially worthless to the
16 government, we would have either laughed or been shaken
17 to our core. If I were in front of the President right
18 now and were able to convey this state of affairs, he
19 would be astounded that the federal procurement system
20 is, simply put, shoving veterans to the back of the
21 bus."

22 Thank you very much for this opportunity.
23 Thank you for the time.

24 MS. CARSON: Yes. And thank you for your
25 comments. I would like to say we just received this

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1 yesterday, and I appreciate that you came in to bring
2 this forward. I do want you to have faith that we will
3 address this. I think there is some data that we want
4 to look at. I want you to know that SBA and the
5 federal government don't put one program first ahead of
6 others, but I think you've brought forward some
7 information that we want to look at. I do think it may
8 be appropriate for SBPAC to engage with DOE --

9 MR. DODDS: OSDBU, yeah.

10 MS. CARSON: -- with the OSDBU. And may I ask
11 if you'll take that on for us?

12 MR. DODDS: I will, yeah.

13 MS. CARSON: Okay.

14 MR. DODDS: Thank you so much.

15 MR. PHIPPS: Michael Phipps. I just have one
16 quick comment for the record. DOE is not the only
17 agency where we see those trends. The Advisory
18 Committee on Veteran Business Affairs just put forth
19 one of the recommendations to create a business
20 development program for service-disabled veterans that
21 is similar to the 8(a) program. The reason contracting
22 officers use the 8(a) program is because it's so easy
23 to make the awards, and it's not protestable. So our
24 recommendations have been set forth to the SBA, to
25 Congress, and to the President to address that specific

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1 issue.

2 MS. CARSON: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
3 Phipps. And that was in your role as the Advisory
4 Committee for the -- for Veteran Business Affairs,
5 correct?

6 MR. PHIPPS: Correct.

7 MS. CARSON: Good. So it is in two places for
8 action, and I appreciate you bringing that forward.

9 Unfortunately, we do need to close the meeting
10 for today. I think we have much to follow up on, and I
11 appreciate the interest.

12 MR. VENKATESAN: Barbara?

13 MS. CARSON: Yes?

14 MR. VENKATESAN: Would you take one public
15 comment?

16 MS. CARSON: Yes, please.

17 MR. VENKATESAN: I apologize.

18 MS. CARSON: Could you please identify
19 yourself?

20 MR. VENKATESAN: Jody Venkatesan with Platinum
21 Business Services. I'll be real brief.

22 MS. CARSON: Okay. Two minutes.

23 MR. VENKATESAN: Just two things, and I'll be
24 real brief. Sorry?

25 MS. CARSON: Go ahead. You've got two

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1 minutes.
 2 MR. VENKATESAN: Yeah, I'll be real brief.
 3 One, and I really think this is to OMB, there needs to
 4 be federal-wide recertification for service-disabled
 5 control and size standards, number one. Number two, we
 6 need national or federal-wide -- and I echo that -- of
 7 the CE verification or verification of service-
 8 disabled. And I'm saying that as a veteran-owned
 9 service-disabled CB business because we've experienced
 10 things that we don't want other veterans to experience.
 11 The third thing, and I think that the -- all
 12 of -- and I think especially OMB and the SBA -- and I
 13 hope that we can do this, work with the House Small
 14 Business Committee to do set-aside contracts for
 15 service-disabled much similar to the 8(a) program. I
 16 think the veterans especially coming out of the last --
 17 in Afghanistan deserve it, and that's all I want to
 18 say.
 19 MS. CARSON: Jody, that was very brief, but I
 20 got it, and I have appreciated the conversations we've
 21 had over the last month. And, so, I know exactly what
 22 he is talking about, and if anyone here has followups,
 23 I'm sure that Jody would be happy to provide more
 24 information on that as well.
 25 So unfortunately we are going to end for

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1 today, but this is not all. Tomorrow, you could have
 2 eight hours more if you come to the Advisory Committee
 3 on Veteran Business Affairs here at the same place.
 4 Thank you so much. We're closing the meeting.
 5 (Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the meeting was
 6 adjourned.)
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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
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 3
 4 I, Janet Evans-Watkins, do hereby certify that
 5 the foregoing proceedings were recorded by me and
 6 reduced to typewriting under the supervision of For The
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