

Small Business Advocacy Council

July 31, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Participants

Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts

Senator Josh Miller

Steve Adams

Ted Almon

Tracy Baran

Denise Barge

Sherri Carrera

Kelly Carello

Mark Deion

Louis Francis

Sid Goldman

Ed Greene

Christine Grieco

Vladimir Ibarra

Douglas Jobling

Bob Lafond

David Lucier

Linda Lulli

Ed Mazze

Inez Mello

Jerry Meyer

Martin Omansky

Phil Papoojian

Ray Valley

Bud Violet

Jennifer Wood

Eli Zupnick

Lt. Governor Roberts called the meeting to order at 8:30 am

She began the meeting by asking for some updates from organizations involved in healthcare for small business. Phil Papoojian informed the group that his group was still very much focused on working towards universal health care based on a community rating. Linda Lulli from the Rhode Island Business Group on Health informed the group that they were working on their health summit that is occurring on September 21, and anyone is interested should get involved.

Matt Stark, from the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner, updated the group about the passage of the section 125 cafeteria plan mandate that passed this session. He explained that the implementation of this law has been pushed back until 2009 to allow time to reach out to businesses, accountants, payroll services and others. Lt. Governor Roberts said that SBAC could be a great venue for OHIC to reach out to small businesses around the state.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked Tracy Baran to discuss some of the work of the workgroup focused on women owned small businesses. She explained that some of the issues that the group began to look into were: specific issues related to access to capital for women, issues surrounding women reentering the workplace, the effect of childcare on women interested in starting a business.

Senator Miller then updated the council on the work of the legislative workgroup. He explained that SBAC made a great effort with the SBA tax credit issue, but ultimately was not able to overcome concerns about its fiscal impact. He also mentioned that one great success of the session was the passage of S647, which puts together a study group looking into combining the small group and direct pay markets, among other issues. Senator Miller also explained that the senate dismissed the fire code amendment because it came to them too late.

Senator Miller stressed that one of the most important things that SBAC can do is work to put together specific proposals over the summer and fall so that they are ready for the start of the session. Lt. Governor Roberts agreed with this, and said the legislative workgroup should meet a number of times through the summer and fall to prepare for the next session.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked the group if anyone had any updates, and Sherri Carerra from Every Company Counts told the group that her organization, along with the Secretary of State's office, was

sponsoring an event call We Mean Business. She said that the focus of the event would be on making it easier for small business owners to interact with the various government agencies that affect them. She said members could find out more information at www.wemeanbusinessri.com.