

April 9, 2007

8:30 am

Room 211 State House

Small Business Advocacy Council

Legislative Workgroup Minutes

Attendees:

Senator Josh Miller

Marty Cooper

Sherri Carerra

Kelly Carrelo

Mark Deion

Darlene Evans

John Gregory

Mark Hayward

Ted Almon

Jerry Meyer

Dave Carlin

Justin Aina

Bob Lafond

Janet Raymond

Gip Cabral

Paul DeRoche

Maureen Ewing

Jennifer Wood

Eli Zupnick

Dan Meuse

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Introduction:

The Chairman began by opening up the floor to discussion about what the workgroup can do to be most effective. It was suggested that the group look into healthcare mandates, then noted that this could be something that the Small Business Health Coordinating Council would be addressing. The SBA tax credit was then brought up, and it was noted that this was an issue that the council could all get behind.

Fire Code:

The next issue discussed was the effect of the fire code on small business in the state. It was mentioned that one of the biggest issues with the fire code was the lack of uniformity in the interpretation and enforcement of the code. It was also mentioned that we should look into some sort of tax credit for small businesses that have spent money complying with the code.

Chairman Miller then said that the most effective way that the group could advocate would be to push for a small number of focused changes to the code, instead of pushing for a full repeal.

It was then brought up that perhaps there could be a way to increase

the accountability in the information dissemination process through a system in which small business know who they have to go to for information on the fire code, and know who they can appeal to. It was mentioned that perhaps the grant money recently made available could be used for training in this area.

It was also mentioned that perhaps another avenue regarding the fire code we should look into is making sure correct information gets to small business owners, possibly through some sort of public relations campaign.

Jennifer Wood, General Counsel/Chief of Policy for Lt. Governor Roberts, then said that she and her staff will look into the specific technical changes for procedural solutions that could be incorporated in the fire code in order to bring about the desired changes. She mentioned that she would have the proposals for the group by the next meeting.

SBA guaranty tax credit:

The discussion then turned to the SBA tax credit, and it was decided that this was an issue that the group would be endorsing, and recommending to the SBAC that it be advocated for. Some suggestions were made that perhaps some letters from affected members of the public could be offered to key legislators as an advocacy tool.

Regulatory Issues:

The Chairman then directed the discussion towards the regulatory environment. It was mentioned that perhaps the group could look into advocating for some changes in the Regulatory Flexibility laws that would provide mechanisms for communication between the EDC's Every Company Counts and the Secretary of State's office on regulatory issues involving small business. It was also mentioned that perhaps a change could be made in the law that gives the Small Business Advocate standing to sue for violations in RegFlex laws.

The issue of apprenticeship ratios was then brought up, and it was decided that the group generally supported the position that the ratio structure should be examined, though this would not be one of the specific priorities of the legislative workgroup.

Conclusion:

Chairman Miller then reiterated that the council needs to be extremely focused in order to be effective. He said that we need to take on three issues that we can advocate for, and that have a realistic chance of passage, and push those issues hard. He noted that in the past, small business groups had not always been so effective at doing this, and that this could be the specific strength of the council.

Chairman Miller then said that the next meeting of the group will be held in three weeks, and that at that time the Lt. Governor's office will bring the specific proposals to the group. The group will then decide

what to recommend to the council as a whole to advocate for.