

**U.S. Senate Committee on
SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**John F. Kerry
Chairman**

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Kerry Urges Administration to Increase Federal Assistance for Veteran and Reservist Small Business Owners

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Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, held a hearing today during which he called on federal agencies to improve and strengthen their assistance programs for veteran and reservist small business owners.

Citing the continual inability of government agencies to meet their service-disabled veteran small business contracting goals, Kerry pushed the administration to do more to help veteran entrepreneurs start, grow, and maintain their businesses.

"Record numbers of guard and reservists are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to find their businesses struggling," said Kerry. "America is relying on our guard and reservists to fight the war on terror, but Washington is not providing the tools and the outreach they require to succeed when they're discharged. We owe these men and women an enormous debt of gratitude, and at the very least, we need to provide the tools for them to make sure their businesses can prosper while they're gone and when they return."

Chairman Kerry has long fought for expansion of veteran's entrepreneurship programs. In 1999, Kerry created the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, which provides low interest loans to businesses dependent on reservists who are called up to active duty. Last Congress, Kerry included a proposal to provide grants to these businesses on the Committee's bipartisan SBA reauthorization bill (S.3778). This bill was unanimously approved by the Committee in July 2006. Kerry continues to call on federal agencies to coordinate veteran outreach and to meet the contracting goal of 3 percent for service-disabled veteran owned businesses.

In addition, today Kerry introduced The Active Duty Military Tax Relief Act of 2007 with Senator Gordon Smith (R-Ore) to create new tax credits that bolster small businesses and their employees who are called to military service.