

Global Markets: Access to international marketplaces and expansion of trade are priorities for several small business organizations.

Issues related to global markets include:

- Reducing barriers to trade
- Market opportunities throughout the world for women entrepreneurs
- Presidential trade promotion authority
- China's compliance with World Trade Organization obligations
- Free-trade agreements

The U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce also cites the guest-worker issue as a legislative priority.

Organizations that list global markets and international trade as priority issues include:

- SBE Council
- U.S. Chamber
- USHCC
- WE Inc.

Government Procurement: In 1994, the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act set a goal for federal agencies to award at least five percent of all prime and subcontract dollars to women-owned small businesses (WOSBs). Despite continued growth in the number and economic impact of women-owned firms, that goal has never been achieved on a government-wide basis. Key initiatives in this issue include:

- Reports from all federal agencies on enforcement of the Talent Amendment and monitoring of the program at the regional level
- Oversight hearings on SBA's size standards regulation
- Support for the October 2002 OMB contract-bundling procurement policy initiative and other anti-bundling initiatives
- Reduction of federal paperwork requirements, including ensuring that regulations are less costly and complicated for small business
- Federal small business programs focusing on women-owned small businesses
- Federal procurement opportunities for women entrepreneurs
- Reauthorization of restricted competition for WOSBs

Organizations listing government procurement as a key issue include:

- BPW/USA
- NAWBO

- NASE
- NFIB
- NSBA
- SBE Council
- USHCC
- WE Inc.
- WIPP

Health Care: Affordable health care for employees is at or near the top of every business association's list of issue priorities. Within that issue, Association Health Plans (AHP) are included on the list of legislative priorities for the majority of women's and small business organizations. Except for the NSBA, all list the passage of legislation providing for AHPs as a top priority. The NSBA, while also concerned with the rising cost of health insurance, opposes AHPs on the grounds that it would circumvent existing state rules. Other health care issues cited by business organizations include:

- Affordable health care and health-care insurance for small business owners and their employees
- National insurance risk pools such as association health plans (AHPs)
- Options for individuals who buy their own health insurance
- Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)
- Tax credits to small business employers who pay a portion of the cost of employee health insurance premiums or employee HSA contributions
- Health insurance deductibility
- Individual deductions of qualified long-term care insurance premiums
- Tax equity for sole proprietors and S corporations with respect to deductions of the cost of health insurance from business income
- Medical liability reform
- IT revolution in the health care sector

Organizations naming health care issues as a priority include:

- BPW/USA
- NASE
- NAWBO
- NFIB
- NSBA
- SBE Council
- U.S. Chamber
- USHCC
- WE Inc.
- WIPP

Legal and Regulatory Reform: Issues identified that relate to initiatives for legal reform and litigation management include:

- Class-action reform
- Tort reform
- Asbestos litigation crisis
- Small business liability limits
- Legal environment in states and problem jurisdictions
- Curbing frivolous lawsuits and financial damages limitations for lawsuits
- Limiting damages in medical liability lawsuits
- Strengthening the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA)
- Compliance with the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (1996) and the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act (2002)
- Product standards to protect sellers
- Principles of sound science and quality data in regulations

Organizations listing legal reform as a key initiative include:

- NASE
- NFIB
- NSBA
- SBE Council
- U.S. Chamber
- WE Inc.
- WIPP

Retirement and Pensions: In addition to issues involving the nation's Social Security program, many organizations cite the need to take a closer look at the nation's private and public pension systems and their impact on small businesses. The following are issues of concern:

- Private pension plans in all forms
- Continuation of the temporary 30-year Treasury rate replacement for calculating pension-plan contributions
- Incentives to purchase retirement vehicles that offer a steady stream of income for life
- Simplification of current pension system

Organizations citing retirement and pension as priority initiatives include:

- BPW/USA
- NAWBO
- NSBA
- U.S. Chamber

Social Security Reform: Almost all groups support Social Security reform. WIPP further supports representation by

the WOSB community in discussions on Social Security reform.

- BPW/USA
- NASE
- NAWBO
- WE Inc.
- SBE Council
- U.S. Chamber
- USHCC
- WIPP

Technology and Telecommunications: A commitment to scientific research and technological entrepreneurship—spurred by small businesses—is a priority for several business organizations. These priorities include:

- Small business research and development
- Research and experimentation tax credit
- Overhaul of telecom regulations
- SBA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, including mentoring opportunities for SBIR companies
- Federal legislation that would close Internet-based markets and technology to small business (opposed)
- Tax-free Internet
- Solutions to allow the technology sector to flourish and innovate

Organizations identifying technology and telecommunications as a priority include:

- NASE
- NAWBO
- SBE Council
- U.S. Chamber
- WE Inc.
- WIPP

Other Issues: *The following items do not fall into any of the above categories but were cited as a priority by one or more small business organizations:*

- Support and associated funding for the Workforce Investment Act
- Reaffirming America's preeminence in science, technology, and basic research
- Continuation of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise language in the final version of Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU)
- Reauthorization of TEA-21 to increase investment in infrastructure
- Commercial aviation issues
- Promotion of travel and tourism

- Giving business a voice in all homeland-security decisions
- Renewal of the federal Terror Risk Insurance Act (TRIA)
- Global initiative created to prevent intellectual property theft, counterfeiting and piracy
- Workplace rules adjustment to meet the modern-day needs of workers and employers
- Immigration issues
- Reforming the Occupational Safety and Health Act that governs OSHA
- Expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Superfund liability
- ERA and the Violence Against Women Act
- Energy policy; development of alternative energy sources

Organization	Health Care	Tax Reform	Gov't Procurement	Soc Sec	Tech Telecom	Legal & Regulatory Reform	Pension Reform	Global Mkts	Access To Capital
BPW/USA	x	x	x	x			x		
NASE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
NAWBO	x	x	x	x	x		x		x
NFIB	x	x	x			x			
NSBA	x	x	x			x	x		x
SBE Council	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
U.S. Chamber	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
USHCC	x	x	x	x				x	
WE Inc.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
WIPP	x	x	x	x	x	x			

Issues listed in descending order of priority (left to right)

The National Women’s Business Council is a bi-partisan federal advisory body created to serve as an independent source of advice to the President, Congress and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners.

The Council’s mission is to promote bold initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women’s business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces—from start-up to success to significance.

For more information about the Council, contact: National Women’s Business Council, 409 3rd Street, SW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20024; phone 202-205-3850; fax: 202-205-6825; e-mail: info@nwbc.gov ; Web site: www.nwbc.gov.

Organization Acronyms Used in this Brief

Acronym	Organization
BPW/USA	Business & Professional Women/USA
NASE	National Association for the Self Employed
NAWBO	National Association of Women Business Owners
NFIB	National Federation of Independent Business
NSBA	National Small Business Association

Acronym	Organization
SBE Council	Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council
U.S. Chamber	U.S. Chamber of Commerce
USHCC	U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
WE Inc.	Women Entrepreneurs Inc.
WIPP	Women Impacting Public Policy