



WCOE LEGISLATIVE BURST

WOMEN CONSTRUCTION OWNERS AND EXECUTIVES

MARCH 2019

WCOE Legislative Burst

Issue Highlights

- WCOE Comes to Washington – Education, Lobbying & Networking
- Make Your Contacts in the 116th Congress – Woman to Congresswoman
- House Congressional District Work Periods

WCOE Letter to the Hill

- To Senate: WCOE Supports Two House-Passed Bills on Small Business Issues Important to Women

You Might Want to Know

- WCOE Participates in Capitol Hill Staff Briefing

Save the Date

- 2020 WCOE Washington Meeting April 19 – 20

Great Reviews for Annual Meeting in Washington, DC

WCOE Priorities Addressed at the National Meeting

Members Hear from GSA Administrator and Rep. Murphy

WCOE, hosting its annual meeting at Washington's historic Willard Hotel, March 3 – 5, showcased an impressive array of speakers and panelists who focused on legislative and business issues of importance to WCOE members. While including extraordinary speakers, another important feature of the meeting involved networking and visits to Capitol Hill to promote WCOE's legislative agenda. A link to the conference issue sheets, which includes bill cosponsors and key lobbying points, can be found [here](#). WCOE is already on the leading edge of federal legislation to ensure gender equality on public boards and did much to pursue that goal on Capitol Hill during the conference.

The conference featured speaker was Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA), Emily W. Murphy. She offered her insight on how GSA manages more than 371 million square feet of property and \$54 billion annually in federal government contracts and gave an outlook on her charge for 2019. Ms. Murphy noted she had "long been an advocate of efforts to ensure the inclusion of women-owned businesses in government contracting," and commended the group on their commitment to the industry and on their work on behalf of women in the industry. She also touted GSA's success in awarding contracts to women-owned businesses, including more nontraditional areas for women, such as construction.

The group was inspired again on Tuesday, when they heard from two more remarkable females, Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and Therese Meers, Counsel for Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), in his position as ranking member of the Senate Small Business Committee. Rep. Murphy shared her thoughts on how the House will move forward on industry issues in 2019 and discussed her work in 2018 on procedures to help federal government contractors receive payment for change orders. She encouraged the group to continue their work on women construction contracting issues. Ms. Meers impressed the group with her knowledge of WCOE and expertly educated the group on many of the issues they

would be lobbying on during their Hill visits that day.

In addition to the federal legislative and regulatory issues addressed, attendees heard an industry forecast and were educated on bonding issues, cybersecurity for small businesses, the Women's National History Museum and women on public boards.

WCOE had a record number of Hill visits with impressive results. Next year's meeting in Washington is already scheduled for April 19 – 20, so if you missed it this year, don't let that happen in 2020! WCOE welcomes first-timers!

WCOE Members Connect with Women Members of Congress in Washington

Now We Need YOU to take the Lead When Members are Home to Meet with Constituents

The 116th U.S. Congress convened in January with 42 new women – from pediatricians to business executives to former military officers to a former cabinet secretary. In total, women hold almost 25 percent of the 535 seats. There are 25 women Senators and 102 women in the House. Women have been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from 46 of the 50 states. Of course, we're also seeing a record number of women run for president. Still, you have to do your part!

WCOE building relationships and promoting WCOE issues. WCOE President Sheila Ohrenberg and other WCOE Kansas members met personally with new Representative Sharice Davids. WCOE's California delegation had great meetings with Rep. Jackie Speier's office, Senator Dianne Feinstein's office, Senator Kamala Harris' office and Anna Eshoo's office so WCOE can be on the leading edge of gender equity on public boards. WCOE members also touched base with the offices of Rep. Cheri Bustos (IL), Senator Amy Klobuchar (MN), Rep. Betty McCollum (MN), Rep. Ann Wagner (MO), Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Rep. Carolyn Maloney (NY), and Rep. Jennifer Wexton (VA). All of these women understand the challenges women face in business and in the workforce but as Congress moves its legislative agenda, we want to be sure that Democratic and Republican Congresswomen and Congressmen understand the unique perspective of women in the construction industry and are willing to address the challenges.

We need you to help with the women and men in Congress to move our issues forward. – while we want to build our relationships with the new female members, many men are leaders on our issues as well. So, whether you've met your Congressperson or not, check them out or find out who they are on this [link](#) and then be sure to contact them when they are back home during the April recess.

U.S. House District Work Periods

House Members are frequently home on Friday plus have times scheduled in their districts to meet with constituents:

April 15 – 28

May 24 – 31

June 2 – 8

July 1 – 8

September 2 - 8

October 1 - 13

November 1 -10

November 25 - 29

August Summer Recess

Dates subject to change depending on matters pending before the House

Whether you've met your Congressperson or not...[Check them out or find out](#) who represents you. Then be sure to contact them when they are back home! Review the [WCOE issue sheets](#) before your meetings!

Send feedback on your visits to WCOE's Washington Representative Dana Thompson

dthompsonwcoe@outlook.com

See the Senate Schedule [here](#).

WCOE Letter to Senate

Supporting Small Business Bills

Once the 115th Session of Congress adjourned, all bills that did not make it through the full legislative process into law were dead. So, as bills WCOE supported last session get re-introduced this session, WCOE will support them again. It has already happened!

Last year the House passed two small business bills WCOE supported but they languished in the Senate. This year the House has already passed them again and just before the WCOE meeting in Washington, WCOE sent a letter urging the Senate to consider them this year. Link to the letter [here](#). Visiting with your Senators? Then also talk about these two bills. They are:

Incentivizing Fairness in Subcontracting Act (H.R. 227)

Introduced by **Representatives Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), Josh Harder (D-CA) and Trent Kelly (R-MS)**, [H.R. 227](#), would give subcontractors a new procedure to file formal notification to the federal government on the lack of prompt payment for completed work. The dispute process would go through the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization ('OSDBU') and would then require it to determine the validity of a claim and the resolution process. In turn, the bill would clarify that prime contractors have the ability to receive subcontracting credit for lower tiers.

This bill is important because access to capital remains one of the most limiting factors to women-owned businesses in the construction industry. The struggle for necessary capital affects not only the establishment of new women-owned construction businesses but also the sustainability and growth of already established women-owned construction firms. It is, therefore, especially critical for women-owned business to be paid promptly on completion of work in both the public and private sector. In the public market there is a need to improve compliance with existing contractor payment regulations in federal and federally assisted procurement. Better compliance with payment rules by prime contractors, coupled with more transparency by federal agencies regarding compliance is particularly critical in ensuring women construction owners succeed.

Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act (H.R. 190)

Introduced by **Representative Roger Marshall (R-KS)**, [H.R. 190](#) would raise the dollar amount of sole-source contract awards available for **women-owned (WOSB) or service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) is an eligible WOSB or SDVOSB**. This is necessary because the current threshold has not kept up with inflation. This change could help expand the number of women-owned construction firms participating in the federal construction market.

You Might Want to Know...

WCOE Participated in a House Staff Education Briefing With the Construction Industry Procurement Coalition

On March 28, in coordination with Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Chair of the House Small Business Committee, the Construction Industry Procurement Coalition (CIPC), hosted a staff education briefing at the U.S. House entitled, "What Every Congressional Staffer Should Know about the Construction Industry." The education session was designed to familiarize staff with the complicated world of federal government procurement procedures with a focus on the construction industry.

In a power point presentation, the session covered how contractors find out about contract opportunities, told them about SAM and NAICS Codes. It explained how set-asides work and the difference between subcontractors and primes. It detailed how bonding works and let people know FAR is not just a way to measure distance!

CIPC is a coalition of construction organizations representing tens of thousands of firms and individuals engaged in all facets of construction, to promote common sense procurement reforms that benefit the government, taxpayers, small businesses and the entire industry. WCOE joined the Coalition in 2018.