



March 3, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chairwoman
House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Re: House Bill 790 – Procurement – Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs –
Small Business Reserve Program and Veteran – Owned Small Business Enterprise Program**

Position: *Support*

Chairwoman Pendergrass and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 790, Procurement – Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs – Small Business Reserve Program and Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise Program. House Bill 790 seeks to reinvigorate the Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Program by increasing business participation, agency oversight, and regulations necessary to implement a successful program.

Enacted in 2010, the Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) program was designed to provide contracting opportunities on state-funded procurements for qualified veteran-owned small businesses. Since the program's conception, individual State agencies and departments have struggled to meet the aspirational goal as cited in the annual Board of Public Works review of the program.

The 2020 VSBE Work Group, comprised of multiple state agencies and veteran stakeholders, worked tirelessly to identify and address deficiencies within the VSBE program. House Bill 790 is the culmination of these efforts and reflects all the ideas, compromises, and aspirations of the regulatory agencies and community stakeholders. As such, I believe that the passage of this legislation will provide meaningful measures to improve the Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) program.

As a proud Veteran of the United States Air Force and a small business owner, I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 790, which shows your dedicated support to our veteran business leaders in Maryland. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen G. Principe".

Stephen G. Principe, President
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