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**WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS IMPROVEMENT ACT STRENGTHENS SUPPORT FOR AMERICA'S
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Washington, D.C.- The Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC) applauds Congresswoman Sharice Davids (KS-03) and Congressman Jim Hagedorn (MN-01) for introducing the *Women's Business Centers Improvement Act of 2019* ([H.R. 4405](#)), which strengthens and modernizes the Women's Business Centers (WBC) program at the Small Business Administration (SBA), improving and expanding services for the nation's 12.3 million women entrepreneurs .

The *Women's Business Centers Improvement Act of 2019* includes critical improvements to the WBC program by lifting the cap on individual center grants to \$300,000 allowing centers to expand their reach, establishing an accreditation program to raise the standards of excellence across centers, and increasing authorization levels to a record \$31.5M, providing room for the program to grow in line with the explosive growth of America's women entrepreneurs.

The AWBC is the national advocate for the network of over 100 Women's Business Centers across America. In response to the introduction of this bill, AWBC CEO Corinne Hodges released the following statement:

"This importance piece of legislation comes at a crucial time for women entrepreneurs across the nation, as they're starting businesses at four times the rate of men. By lifting the cap on individual center grants for this first time in the program's 30 year history and raising authorization levels to \$31.5 million, WBCs will be able to reach more entrepreneurs in need, particularly in rural areas, with the training, counseling, and access to capital they need to thrive," said Ms. Hodges. "I want to thank Representative Davids and Representative Hagedorn for prioritizing women business owners and job creators and for their support of the WBC program."

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About AWBC: AWBC (www.awbc.org) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1998 to support the national network of Women's Business Centers (WBCs) with programming and advocacy. Each year, our members leverage WBC grants to operate more than 150 locations throughout the United States. WBCs have more than 25 years of success in providing business training, counseling, mentoring, and access to capital to women entrepreneurs. The WBC program is a public-private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.