

Kerry: President's State of the Union ignored small businesses

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The following is a statement from Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, on the President's State of the Union address:

"Tuesday night the President talked about his domestic priorities -- about hope and opportunity, about keeping the economy moving, and about doing it with more enterprise, not more government. But on small business, the very backbone of our economy, he had nothing to offer. The President had no new solutions to foster enterprise or innovation, no plan for using small firms to achieve America's energy independence through green technologies, and no recognition of the needs of small businesses destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Where was the hope and opportunity for New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast still so desperately seeking aid to rebuild after one of our country's worst natural disasters? A year and a half later, the jobs of rebuilding the Gulf and better preparing for future disasters are not done. These must remain top priorities in Washington and I'm disappointed the President didn't address them.

"What about the hope and opportunity for small business owners who create two-thirds of the jobs in this country? Many of them are struggling to keep their doors open and remain competitive. Minorities, women and veterans represent the fastest growing groups of entrepreneurs, yet they face constant barriers to success. The Small Business Administration can help where the private sector doesn't, yet the President's cut that agency more than any other in the federal government. And still, after six years, African Americans only get three percent of loan dollars out of the SBA's largest loan program.

"I fear that the President's omission of these key programs and priorities means that once again he'll send up a budget that weakens tools for fostering financial independence that could grow the middle class, close the wealth gap and expand entrepreneurship across all sectors of our society."

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