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October 13, 2023

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U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

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President, Texas Association of African American Chambers of Commerce

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Circle City Broadcasting

Kelisha Garrett,
Vice-President COO
Governmental Affairs,
Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Susan Vanderbilt,
Chair, Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear, Senator Ernst:

On behalf of the U.S. Black Chamber, Inc. (USBC) and the more than 3 million small Black-owned businesses nationwide, we are writing to express our strong support for S.1896 the SCORE Act of 2023. By moving the Small Business Administration's (SBA) existing SCORE program to a competitive grant structure, while improving and modernizing the coaching model and other components, this legislation will help ensure the next generation of Black entrepreneurs have the tools they need to start and grow their businesses.

SCORE is a national nonprofit organization that, in partnership with the SBA, provides a variety of resources to small businesses. Namely, SCORE operates a national network of mentors who counsel entrepreneurs on a wide range of topics and industries. These coaches are typically retired corporate executives and other business owners whose advice is offered at no cost.

The SCORE Act of 2023 builds on this successful model and implements simple, commonsense changes to unlock the program's full potential. For example, USBC is especially supportive of a provision requiring the SBA to periodically recompute the SCORE cooperative agreement, thus ensuring the program continues to deliver on its mission. We also applaud the inclusion of reforms to the coaching model, particularly a requirement that volunteers receive certification to ensure their knowledge is relevant to the challenges of modern-day small businesses, as well as new accountability and performance standards, among other critical improvements.

The SCORE program has a more than 60-year track record of success. With the few simple changes put forth by the SCORE Act of 2023, we can ensure the program continues to serve the needs of today's Black entrepreneurs. The U.S. Black Chamber, Inc. supports these reforms, and we stand ready to work with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Ron Busby, Sr.
President
U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.