

MEMO *Published May 27, 2026 · 2 minute read*

Congressional Challenge: The Opportunity Builders

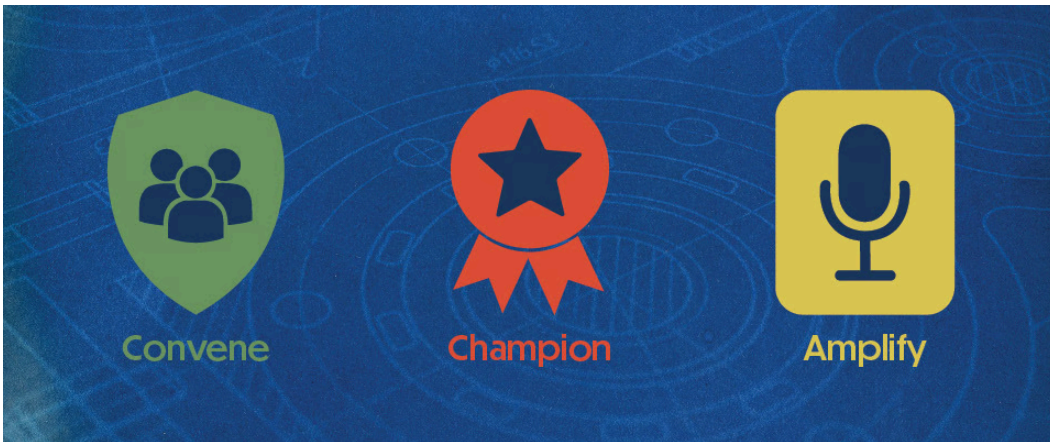
Madeline Burke & Imani Augustus

Small businesses have been in survival mode for years. One crisis bled into the next—supply chains snapped, prices soared, workers disappeared. The strain on American entrepreneurs has reshaped local economies and made long-term growth harder to achieve.

That’s why we launched the **Opportunity Builder Challenge**: to call on Members of Congress to make small businesses a priority and become stronger champions for the entrepreneurs they represent.

We’re recognizing Members who are taking meaningful action to support small businesses by convening local entrepreneurs, championing solutions that expand access to capital and markets, and amplifying the role of business ownership in their communities.

We’ll be updating this regularly with activities from the 119th Congress.




Activity Description

Convene: Members can use their office to bring small business owners, support organizations, and government agencies together in structured forums that surface needs, spread practical knowledge, and build relationships. Examples can include: district-based resource fairs, small business roundtables, and town halls.


Champion: Lawmakers can use their congressional powers—legislation, amendments, appropriations, oversight, and caucuses—to prioritize small business needs and secure concrete policy wins. Examples can include: bill introduction, hearings, letters to agencies, and membership in congressional working groups or caucuses.


Amplify: Members can elevate the experiences, data, and best practices of small business owners to shape public narratives and policy debates at every level. Examples may include: floor speeches, op-eds, and social media campaigns.


Senator Ed Markey (D-MA)




Sen. Ed Markey
D-MA

 **Champion (8+ Actions):** Led and supported legislation to expand access to capital, protect small businesses from tariffs and economic disruption, strengthen innovation programs, and support immigrant and family-owned businesses.

 **Amplify (3+ Actions):** Used reports, public commentary, and economic data to highlight the impact of rising costs, tariffs, and affordability challenges on small businesses.

 **Convene (3+ Actions):** Brought together business owners, industry leaders, and community stakeholders through meetings, roundtables, and hearings focused on economic pressures and wealth equity.



Representative Dina Titus (D-NV-01)



Rep. Dina Titus D-NV-01



Champion (4+ Actions): Advanced legislation and bipartisan initiatives to strengthen small businesses, combat organized retail crime, support family-owned businesses, and expand financial literacy and coaching programs for working families.



Convene (3+ Actions): Brought together small businesses, retail leaders, and entrepreneurial advocates through meetings and roundtables focused on tariffs, rising economic pressures, and local business growth.

Representative Kweisi Mfume (D-MD-07)



Rep. Kweisi Mfume D-MD-07



Champion (6+ Actions): Led efforts to strengthen oversight and accountability in federal small business programs, improve transparency in contracting opportunities, protect workers and local economies, and support small businesses impacted by financial instability and government disruptions.



Convene (1 Action): Joined local business and entrepreneurship leaders during Small Business Month to discuss opportunities and challenges facing small businesses and local economic growth.

Representative Johnny Olszewski (D-MD-02)



Rep. Johnny Olszewski D-MD-02



Champion (8+ Actions): Advanced legislation and advocacy to support small business innovation, workforce development, immigrant entrepreneurship, and tariff relief while strengthening connections between small businesses and skilled workers.



Amplify (1 Action): Used public remarks on the House floor to highlight the importance of connecting small businesses with career and technical education graduates to address workforce needs.



Convene (1 Action): Joined local business owners and entrepreneurial advocates during Small Business Month to discuss challenges and opportunities facing small businesses and local economies.

