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INCREASING ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS FOR SMALL, MINORITY, AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Legislation that will increase access to government contracts for small, minority, and women-owned businesses has passed both the Illinois House and Senate! This legislation will now head to Governor Pritzker to be signed.

Senate Bill 2192 provides that a bidder who has failed to be awarded a contract by the Department of Innovation and Technology, the Department of Transportation, the Capital Development Board, or the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority after four consecutive bids for the same services, will receive an explanation as to the reason for the rejections. This information is crucial for small, minority, and women-owned businesses struggling to obtain government contracts.

"It is imperative that when small business owners spend the time and resources needed to procure government contracts, they understand the reasons their bids have been rejected, stated Elliot Richardson, President of the Small Business Advocacy Council (SBAC). SBAC CEO, Scott Baskin, adds, "Small businesses drive our economy so we want to ensure they can compete for government contracts. The same is true for minority and women-owned businesses because they support local communities and create jobs."

Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce explains, "Transparency breeds progress. This bill empowers bidders by ensuring a clear understanding of why their consecutive bids were rejected, fostering accountability, and encouraging continuous improvement in the procurement process. When there is openness and clarity in processes and decision-making, it leads to positive advancements and improvements. This transparency helps bidders understand the reasons behind their rejections, allowing them to learn from their past bids and make necessary adjustments to improve their chances of success in future bids. By fostering a culture of transparency, the bill encourages continuous progress in the procurement process, ensuring fairness, accountability, and ultimately better outcomes for all parties involved. The Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Senate Bill 2192."

"Contractors deserve to know why their bid was not accepted, and through this legislation, we can increase visibility and transparency in the process," said State Senator Ram Villivalam. "Businesses want to know what they can do to improve their chances of being selected, and we can address their concerns by making sure they know how the process works and what was decided."

"Diversifying the state procurement process has been one of my most-pressing priorities during my time in the legislature, and I'm happy to finally see this bill move forward," said Representative Davis. "The state has an endless supply of diverse and talented businesses with which they can do business. This measure makes sure that the state has good reasons when these businesses are turned away and ensure that businesses of all sizes get a fair shot at securing state contracts."

"As the most diverse state in the Midwest, Illinois' vendors and service providers should reflect the diversity of the state. All businesses, whether small or large, deserve a chance to win state contracts," said Representative Smith. "I applaud the passage of this measure, which will bring more transparency and diversity in the state procurement process."

SBAC Executive Board Member and President of Pinpoint Precision Engineering Michael Bempah adds, "As a small local minority business owner, I value receiving feedback from state agencies. Receiving feedback helps small businesses better serve the agencies and all stakeholders involved, especially taxpayers. Small businesses are the heart and soul of our Illinois communities. We all win when small businesses win!"

The Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Advocacy Council are thankful that Senate Bill 2192 has passed out of the House and Senate. We are working on additional policies to support small, minority, and women-owned businesses vying for government contracts. Please reach out to Emma Roach, emma@sbacil.org, to schedule interviews or with additional questions.

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