

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 38

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to Business Program,  
and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 24 (legislative day, JANUARY 3), 2023

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business  
and Entrepreneurship

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## A BILL

To amend the Small Business Act to codify the Boots to  
Business Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Veteran Entrepreneur-  
5 ship Training Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.**

7 Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.  
8 657b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

9 “(h) BOOTS TO BUSINESS PROGRAM.—

1           “(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In this  
2 subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

3           “(A) a member of the Armed Forces, in-  
4 cluding the National Guard or Reserves;

5           “(B) an individual who is participating in  
6 the Transition Assistance Program established  
7 under section 1144 of title 10, United States  
8 Code;

9           “(C) an individual who—

10           “(i) served on active duty in any  
11 branch of the Armed Forces, including the  
12 National Guard or Reserves; and

13           “(ii) was discharged or released from  
14 such service under conditions other than  
15 dishonorable; and

16           “(D) a spouse or dependent of an indi-  
17 vidual described in subparagraph (A), (B), or  
18 (C).

19           “(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—During the period be-  
20 ginning on the date of enactment of this subsection  
21 and ending on September 30, 2028, the Adminis-  
22 trator shall carry out a program to be known as the  
23 ‘Boots to Business Program’ to provide entrepre-  
24 neurship training to covered individuals.

1           “(3) GOALS.—The goals of the Boots to Busi-  
2           ness Program are to—

3                   “(A) provide assistance and in-depth train-  
4                   ing to covered individuals interested in business  
5                   ownership; and

6                   “(B) provide covered individuals with the  
7                   tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify  
8                   a business opportunity, draft a business plan,  
9                   identify sources of capital, connect with local  
10                  resources for small business concerns, and start  
11                  up a small business concern.

12          “(4) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

13                  “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Boots to Busi-  
14                  ness Program may include—

15                          “(i) a presentation providing exposure  
16                          to the considerations involved in self-em-  
17                          ployment and ownership of a small busi-  
18                          ness concern;

19                          “(ii) an online, self-study course fo-  
20                          cused on the basic skills of entrepreneur-  
21                          ship, the language of business, and the  
22                          considerations involved in self-employment  
23                          and ownership of a small business concern;

24                          “(iii) an in-person classroom instruc-  
25                          tion component providing an introduction

1 to the foundations of self employment and  
2 ownership of a small business concern; and

3 “(iv) in-depth training delivered  
4 through online instruction, including an  
5 online course that leads to the creation of  
6 a business plan.

7 “(B) COLLABORATION.—The Adminis-  
8 trator may—

9 “(i) collaborate with public and pri-  
10 vate entities to develop course curricula for  
11 the Boots to Business Program; and

12 “(ii) modify program components in  
13 coordination with entities participating in a  
14 Warriors in Transition program, as defined  
15 in section 738(e) of the National Defense  
16 Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013  
17 (10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

18 “(C) USE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS AND  
19 DISTRICT OFFICES.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator  
21 shall—

22 “(I) ensure that Veteran Busi-  
23 ness Outreach Centers regularly par-  
24 ticipate, on a nationwide basis, in the  
25 Boots to Business Program; and

1                   “(II) to the maximum extent  
2                   practicable, use district offices of the  
3                   Administration and a variety of other  
4                   resource partners and entities in ad-  
5                   ministering the Boots to Business  
6                   Program.

7                   “(ii) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying  
8                   out clause (i), the Administrator may make  
9                   grants to Veteran Business Outreach Cen-  
10                  ters, other resource partners, or other enti-  
11                  ties to carry out components of the Boots  
12                  to Business Program.

13                  “(D) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF  
14                  DEFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—  
15                  The Administrator shall make available to the  
16                  Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of  
17                  Labor information regarding the Boots to Busi-  
18                  ness Program, including all course materials  
19                  and outreach materials related to the Boots to  
20                  Business Program, for inclusion on the websites  
21                  of the Department of Defense and the Depart-  
22                  ment of Labor relating to the Transition Assist-  
23                  ance Program, in the Transition Assistance  
24                  Program manual, and in other relevant mate-

1           rials available for distribution from the Sec-  
2           retary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor.

3           “(E) AVAILABILITY TO DEPARTMENT OF  
4           VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In consultation with the  
5           Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Adminis-  
6           trator shall make available for distribution and  
7           display on the website of the Department of  
8           Veterans Affairs and at local facilities of the  
9           Department of Veterans Affairs outreach mate-  
10          rials regarding the Boots to Business Program,  
11          which shall, at a minimum—

12                   “(i) describe the Boots to Business  
13                   Program and the services provided; and

14                   “(ii) include eligibility requirements  
15                   for participating in the Boots to Business  
16                   Program.

17          “(F) AVAILABILITY TO OTHER PARTICI-  
18          PATING AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall  
19          ensure information regarding the Boots to  
20          Business program, including all course mate-  
21          rials and outreach materials related to the  
22          Boots to Business Program, is made available  
23          to other participating agencies in the Transition  
24          Assistance Program and upon request of other  
25          agencies.

1           “(5) COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCEDURES.—  
2           The Administration shall use relevant competitive  
3           bidding procedures with respect to any contract or  
4           cooperative agreement executed by the Administra-  
5           tion under the Boots to Business Program.

6           “(6) PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OP-  
7           PORTUNITY.—Not later than 30 days before the  
8           deadline for submitting applications for any funding  
9           opportunity under the Boots to Business Program,  
10          the Administration shall publish a notice of the  
11          funding opportunity.

12          “(7) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after  
13          the date of enactment of this subsection, and not  
14          less frequently than annually thereafter, the Admin-  
15          istrator shall submit to the Committee on Small  
16          Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and  
17          the Committee on Small Business of the House of  
18          Representatives a report on the performance and ef-  
19          fectiveness of the Boots to Business Program,  
20          which—

21                  “(A) may be included as part of another  
22                  report submitted to such committees by the Ad-  
23                  ministrator related to the Office of Veterans  
24                  Business Development; and

1           “(B) shall summarize available information  
2 relating to—

3           “(i) grants awarded under paragraph  
4 (4)(C);

5           “(ii) the total cost of the Boots to  
6 Business Program;

7           “(iii) the amount of program funds  
8 used for domestic and international travel  
9 expenses;

10           “(iv) the number of program partici-  
11 pants using each component of the Boots  
12 to Business Program;

13           “(v) the completion rates for each  
14 component of the Boots to Business Pro-  
15 gram;

16           “(vi) to the extent possible—

17           “(I) the demographics of pro-  
18 gram participants, to include gender,  
19 age, race, ethnicity, and relationship  
20 to military;

21           “(II) the number of program  
22 participants that connect with a dis-  
23 trict office of the Administration, a  
24 Veteran Business Outreach Center, or



1 another resource partner of the Ad-  
2 ministration;

3 “(III) the number of program  
4 participants that start a small busi-  
5 ness concern;

6 “(IV) the results of the Boots to  
7 Business and Boots to Business  
8 Reboot course quality surveys con-  
9 ducted by the Office of Veterans Busi-  
10 ness Development before and after at-  
11 tending each of those courses, includ-  
12 ing a summary of any comments re-  
13 ceived from program participants;

14 “(V) the results of the Boots to  
15 Business Program outcome surveys  
16 conducted by the Office of Veterans  
17 Business Development, including a  
18 summary of any comments received  
19 from program participants; and

20 “(VI) the results of other ger-  
21 mane participant satisfaction surveys;

22 “(C) an evaluation of the overall effective-  
23 ness of the Boots to Business Program based  
24 on each geographic region covered by the Ad-  
25 ministration during the most recent fiscal year;

1           “(D) an assessment of additional perform-  
2           ance outcome measures for the Boots to Busi-  
3           ness Program, as identified by the Adminis-  
4           trator;

5           “(E) any recommendations of the Adminis-  
6           trator for improvement of the Boots to Busi-  
7           ness Program, which may include expansion of  
8           the types of individuals who are covered individ-  
9           uals;

10          “(F) an explanation of how the Boots to  
11          Business Program has been integrated with  
12          other transition programs and related resources  
13          of the Administration and other Federal agen-  
14          cies; and

15          “(G) any additional information the Ad-  
16          ministrators determine necessary.”.

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