

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1896

To reauthorize the SCORE program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 8, 2023

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

A BILL

To reauthorize the SCORE 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 “SCORE Act of 2023”.

5 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE SCORE PROGRAM.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8 of the Small Business
7 Act (15 U.S.C. 637) is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (b)(1)—

9 (A) in subparagraph (A)(i)(II)(aa), by in-
10 sserting “with relevant knowledge of modern
11 business practices” after “institutions”; and

12 (B) in subparagraph (B)—

1 (i) by striking “a Service Corps of Re-
2 tired Executives (SCORE) and an Active
3 Corps of Executive (ACE)” and inserting
4 “a Supporting Coaching Opportunities for
5 Resilient Entrepreneurs (SCORE) pro-
6 gram”; and

7 (ii) by striking “SCORE may” and in-
8 serting “the SCORE Program may”; and

9 (2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the
10 following:

11 “(c) SCORE PROGRAM.—

12 “(1) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
14 days after the date of enactment of the SCORE
15 Act of 2023, the Administrator shall enter into
16 a cooperative agreement with an organization
17 described in subparagraph (B) to carry out the
18 SCORE program, which shall provide business
19 coaching to entrepreneurs seeking to form,
20 grow, scale, or sell their small business concern.

21 “(B) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION.—The
22 awardee of the cooperative agreement under
23 subparagraph (A) shall be an organization
24 that—

1 “(i) is well-equipped to provide funda-
2 mental, modern, and relevant business
3 training and counseling to individuals in
4 both rural and urban areas; and

5 “(ii) shall be able to effectively reach
6 underserved individuals while overseeing
7 the volunteers participating in the SCORE
8 program.

9 “(C) RECOMPETE PROCESS.—Not later
10 than 5 years after the date on which the Ad-
11 ministrator enters into a cooperative agreement
12 under subparagraph (A), and every 5 years
13 thereafter, the Administrator shall engage in a
14 competitive bidding process to enter into a co-
15 operative agreement with an organization de-
16 scribed in subparagraph (B).

17 “(2) ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES.—The Adminis-
18 trator shall—

19 “(A) assist the Office of Inspector General
20 of the Administration in conducting their audit
21 of the SCORE program that shall occur once
22 every 3 years; and

23 “(B) establish a process to certify eligible
24 coaches under the SCORE program, which
25 shall—

1 “(i) ensure that the business invest-
2 ments, affiliations, or connections of a
3 coach do not present a conflict of interest
4 with any individual participant that the
5 coach is actively coaching, as determined
6 by the National Women’s Business Coach-
7 es; and

8 “(ii) determine whether the individual
9 applying to be a coach has—

10 “(I) relevant knowledge of mod-
11 ern business practices, including ac-
12 counting, marketing, and hiring per-
13 sonnel; and

14 “(II) a general understanding of
15 the opportunities for growth that the
16 internet and e-commerce poses for
17 owners of small business concerns.

18 “(3) SCORE ASSOCIATION DUTIES.—The
19 SCORE Association shall—

20 “(A) in addition to providing in-person
21 services, maintain and expand online counseling
22 services including webinars, electronic men-
23 toring platforms, e-commerce, and online tool-
24 kits to further support entrepreneurs; and

1 “(B) maintain and enforce requirements
2 for volunteers participating in the SCORE pro-
3 gram, including requirements that—

4 “(i) each volunteer shall meet the per-
5 formance standards established under sub-
6 paragraph (C);

7 “(ii) if a volunteer fails to meet per-
8 formance standards, as evaluated through
9 an annual review, the volunteer shall ad-
10 here to a performance improvement plan
11 for the duration of 1 year; and

12 “(iii) if the volunteer continues to fail
13 to meet performance standards after con-
14 ducting a year-long performance improve-
15 ment plan described in clause (ii), the vol-
16 unteer shall be terminated and dismissed
17 from all participation in the SCORE pro-
18 gram.

19 “(4) JOINT DUTIES.—The Administrator, in
20 consultation with the SCORE Association, shall en-
21 sure that the SCORE program and each chapter of
22 the SCORE program—

23 “(A) develop and implement plans and
24 goals to effectively and efficiently provide serv-
25 ices to individuals in rural areas, including

1 plans for virtual and web-based initiatives,
2 chapter expansion, partnerships, and the devel-
3 opment of new skills by volunteers participating
4 in the SCORE program;

5 “(B) recruit diverse volunteers for the
6 chapters of the SCORE program, in conjunc-
7 tion with the National Women’s Business
8 Coaches; and

9 “(C) establish performance standards for
10 all coaches and employees of the SCORE pro-
11 gram.

12 “(5) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 180 days
13 after the date of enactment of the SCORE Act of
14 2023, the Comptroller General of the United States
15 shall—

16 “(A) conduct a study to identify how many
17 SCORE program chapters are located in rural
18 areas and understand how well the SCORE
19 program is servicing rural areas;

20 “(B) examine the efficacy of performance
21 standards established under paragraph (3)(C);
22 and

23 “(C) submit to the Committee on Small
24 Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate
25 and the Committee on Small Business of the

1 House of Representatives a report on the mat-
 2 ters described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

3 “(6) REAUTHORIZATION.—The SCORE pro-
 4 gram shall sunset on the date that is 4 years after
 5 the date of enactment of the SCORE Act of 2023,
 6 and shall be subject to reauthorization thereafter.”.

7 (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

8 (1) SMALL BUSINESS ACT.—The Small Busi-
 9 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended—

10 (A) in section 3 (15 U.S.C. 632), by add-
 11 ing at the end the following:

12 “(gg) SCORE PROGRAM DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

13 “(1) SCORE PROGRAM.—The term ‘SCORE
 14 program’ means the Supporting Coaching Opportu-
 15 nities for Resilient Entrepreneurs program described
 16 in section 8(c).

17 “(2) SCORE ASSOCIATION.—The term
 18 ‘SCORE Association’ means the Supporting Coach-
 19 ing Opportunities for Resilient Entrepreneurs Asso-
 20 ciation or any successor or other organization that
 21 enters into a cooperative agreement described in sec-
 22 tion 8(c)(1) with the Administrator to operate the
 23 SCORE program.”;

24 (B) in section 7 (15 U.S.C. 636)—

25 (i) in subsection (b)(12)—

1 (I) in the paragraph heading, by
2 striking “SCORE” and inserting
3 “SCORE PROGRAM”; and

4 (II) in subparagraph (A), by
5 striking “Service Corps of Retired Ex-
6 cutives” and inserting “SCORE pro-
7 gram”; and

8 (ii) in subsection (m)(3)(A)(i)(VIII),
9 by striking “Service Corps of Retired Ex-
10 cutives” and inserting “SCORE pro-
11 gram”;

12 (C) in section 20(d)(1)(E) (15 U.S.C. 631
13 note), by striking “Service Corps of Retired Ex-
14 cutives program” and inserting “SCORE pro-
15 gram”; and

16 (D) in section 22 (15 U.S.C. 649)—

17 (i) in subsection (b)—

18 (I) in paragraph (1), by striking
19 “Service Corps of Retired Executives
20 authorized by section (8)(b)(1)” and
21 inserting “SCORE program”; and

22 (II) in paragraph (3), by striking
23 “Service Corps of Retired Executives”
24 and inserting “SCORE program”;
25 and

1 (ii) in subsection (c)(12), by striking
2 “Service Corps of Retired Executives au-
3 thorized by section 8(b)(1)” and inserting
4 “SCORE program”.

5 (2) OTHER LAWS.—

6 (A) SMALL BUSINESS REAUTHORIZATION
7 ACT OF 1997.—Section 707 of the Small Busi-
8 ness Reauthorization Act of 1997 (15 U.S.C.
9 631 note) is amended by striking “Service
10 Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) pro-
11 gram” and inserting “SCORE program de-
12 scribed in section 8(c) of the Small Business
13 Act (15 U.S.C. 637(c))”.

14 (B) VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
15 SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF
16 1999.—Section 301 of the Veterans Entrepre-
17 neurship and Small Business Development Act
18 of 1999 (15 U.S.C. 657b note) is amended—

19 (i) in subsection (a)—

20 (I) in the matter preceding para-
21 graph (1), by striking “Service Core
22 of Retired Executives (described in
23 section 8(b)(1)(B) of the Small Busi-
24 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)(B))
25 and in this section referred to as

1 ‘SCORE’” and inserting “SCORE
2 program described in section 8(c) of
3 the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
4 637(c)) (in this section referred to as
5 the ‘SCORE program’);

6 (II) in paragraphs (1), (2), and
7 (3), by striking “SCORE” each place
8 the term appears and inserting “the
9 SCORE program”; and

10 (III) in paragraph (2), by strik-
11 ing “the” before “establishing”; and

12 (ii) in subsection (b), by striking
13 “SCORE” each place the term appears
14 and inserting “the SCORE program”.

15 (C) MILITARY RESERVIST AND VETERAN
16 SMALL BUSINESS REAUTHORIZATION AND OP-
17 PORTUNITY ACT OF 2008.—The Military Reserv-
18 ist and Veteran Small Business Reauthorization
19 and Opportunity Act of 2008 (15 U.S.C. 636
20 note) is amended—

21 (i) in section 3, by striking paragraph
22 (5) and inserting the following:

23 “(5) the term ‘SCORE program’ means the
24 SCORE program described in section 8(c) of the
25 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(c));” and

1 (ii) in section 201(c)(2)(B)(i), by
2 striking “Service Corps of Retired Execu-
3 tives” and inserting “SCORE program”.

4 (D) CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE PRO-
5 GRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009.—Sec-
6 tion 621 of the Children’s Health Insurance
7 Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (15
8 U.S.C. 657p) is amended—

9 (i) in subsection (a), by striking para-
10 graph (4) and inserting the following:

11 “(4) the term ‘SCORE program’ means the
12 SCORE program described in section 8(e) of the
13 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(c));” and

14 (ii) in subsection (b)(4)(A)(iv), by
15 striking “Service Corps of Retired Execu-
16 tives” and inserting “SCORE program”.

17 (E) ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION
18 ACT.—Section 337(d)(2)(A) of the Energy Pol-
19 icy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C.
20 6307(d)(2)(A)) is amended by striking “Service
21 Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)” and in-
22 serting “SCORE program described in section
23 8(e) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C.
24 637(c))”.

1 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S BUSI-**
 2 **NESS COUNCIL.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Women's Business
 4 Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) is amend-
 5 ed—

6 (1) in section 402(c) (15 U.S.C. 7102(c))—

7 (A) in the subsection heading, by striking
 8 “COUNCIL” and inserting “NWBC”; and

9 (B) by striking “Council” each place that
 10 term appears and inserting “NWBC”;

11 (2) in section 403 (15 U.S.C. 7103)—

12 (A) in subsection (a)(2)(B)—

13 (i) by striking “Small Business”; and

14 (ii) by striking “National Women's
 15 Business Council established under section
 16 405” and inserting “NWBC”; and

17 (B) in subsection (b), by striking “of the
 18 Small Business Administration”;

19 (3) by striking sections 405, 406, and 407 (15
 20 U.S.C. 7105, 7106, 7107) and inserting the fol-
 21 lowing:

22 **“SEC. 405. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S**
 23 **BUSINESS COACHES.**

24 “There is established a group to be known as the Na-
 25 tional Women's Business Coaches, which shall carry out

1 the duties described in section 406 and be composed of
2 the members and staff described in section 407.

3 **“SEC. 406. DUTIES OF THE NWBC.**

4 “The NWBC shall—

5 “(1) collaborate with the SCORE program de-
6 scribed in section 8(c) of the Small Business Act (15
7 U.S.C. 637(c)) to pair women entrepreneurs with
8 coaches under the SCORE program and other mem-
9 bers of the NWBC;

10 “(2) promote the online webinars and other
11 tools and programs of the Administration and re-
12 source partners of the Administration for women en-
13 trepreneurs;

14 “(3) develop workshops on—

15 “(A) the opportunities of internet sales;

16 “(B) e-commerce training, in particular
17 how rural businesses can leverage online market
18 platforms to grow their business;

19 “(C) the different internet-based market
20 platforms that are available to small business
21 concerns;

22 “(D) utilizing social media for marketing
23 and hiring purposes; and

24 “(E) how to grow and scale a small busi-
25 ness through an increased online presence;

1 “(4) serve as a resource and collaborate for the
2 purposes of information sharing between women’s
3 business centers described in section 29 of the Small
4 Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656), small business devel-
5 opment centers (as defined in section 3 of such Act
6 (15 U.S.C. 632)), regional offices of the Administra-
7 tion, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers de-
8 scribed in section 32 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 657b)
9 for—

10 “(A) best practices for recruiting coaches,
11 mentors, and advisors for women entrepreneurs;
12 and

13 “(B) developing materials and programs
14 for women entrepreneurs;

15 “(5) promote participation in the SCORE pro-
16 gram among aspiring and current entrepreneurs in
17 need of guidance and business owners who are will-
18 ing to provide coaching services to entrepreneurs;

19 “(6) be responsible for conducting, managing,
20 and overseeing a Coach Match Program under which
21 NWBC members—

22 “(A) pair individual SCORE program par-
23 ticipants with SCORE program coaches that
24 best fit the needs of the SCORE program par-

1 participants through online and in-person events;
2 or

3 “(B) if preferable to the SCORE program
4 participant, pair an individual SCORE program
5 participant with another SCORE program par-
6 ticipant as a peer-to-peer match;

7 “(7) be responsible for recruiting other business
8 leaders to join the SCORE program as coaches, in
9 particular individuals with technical expertise in the
10 fields of science, technology, engineering, and math
11 and individuals who are well versed in utilizing social
12 media as a business tool and who understand and
13 are adept at navigating the internet commerce eco-
14 system; and

15 “(8) report directly to the Administrator on a
16 semi-annual basis on the activities of the Associa-
17 tion, including, with respect to the Coach Match
18 Program described in paragraph (6)—

19 “(A) the number of matches made by the
20 Association;

21 “(B) the number of businesses served by
22 the program;

23 “(C) the number of SCORE program par-
24 ticipants seeking to be matched, including
25 women participants; and

1 “(D) results from an annual survey sent to
2 participants on the efficacy of the assistance
3 provided by their coach.

4 **“SEC. 407. MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF OF THE NWBC.**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The NWBC shall be composed
6 of 30 volunteer coaches, who shall—

7 “(1) be women business leaders; and

8 “(2) have a demonstrated track record of
9 coaching and mentoring entrepreneurs on topics in-
10 cluding forming, managing, growing, or selling a
11 business.

12 “(b) ROLE OF NWBC STAFF.—

13 “(1) STAFF.—Not more than 4 full-time em-
14 ployees shall support the duties of the NWBC, in
15 particular the Coach Match Program described in
16 section 406(6).

17 “(2) APPLICATIONS.—The full-time employees
18 described in paragraph (1) shall review and accept
19 applications submitted by women business leaders to
20 serve as a coach described in subsection (a).

21 “(3) NONPARTISAN.—The full-time employees
22 described in paragraph (1) shall prioritize selecting
23 nonpartisan individuals to serve as coaches of the
24 NWBC.

1 “(c) DURATION.—Each coach of the NWBC shall
2 serve for a period of 3 years, which may be renewed after
3 submitting a new application for review by the full-time
4 employees described in subsection (b)(1).”;

5 (4) in section 408 (15 U.S.C. 7108)—

6 (A) by striking paragraph (4);

7 (B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as
8 paragraph (4); and

9 (C) by inserting after paragraph (4), as so
10 redesignated, the following:

11 “(5) the term ‘NWBC’ means the National
12 Women’s Business Coaches established under section
13 405;”;

14 (5) by striking section 409 (15 U.S.C. 7109);

15 (6) by redesignating section 410 (15 U.S.C.
16 7110) as section 409; and

17 (7) in section 409, as so redesignated, by strik-
18 ing “Council” each place that term appears and in-
19 serting “NWBC”.

20 (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

21 Section 29(g)(2)(B)(ii) of the Small Business Act (15
22 U.S.C. 656(g)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended—

23 (1) in subclause (IX), by striking “Council”
24 and inserting “Coaches”; and

1 (2) in subclause (X), by striking “Women’s
2 Business Council” and inserting “National Women’s
3 Business Coaches”.

4 **SEC. 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE**
5 **ON WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.**

6 Title IV of the Women’s Business Ownership Act of
7 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) is amended—

8 (1) in section 402 (15 U.S.C. 7102)—

9 (A) in subsection (a)—

10 (i) by striking paragraphs (2) and (5);

11 (ii) by redesignating paragraphs (3)

12 and (4) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respec-

13 tively; and

14 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-

15 lowing:

16 “(4) advise Congress and the President on the
17 challenges facing the formation of businesses owned
18 and controlled by women and best practices for fa-
19 cilitating the growth and development of women’s
20 business enterprises.”;

21 (B) in subsection (b)—

22 (i) by striking “The Interagency” and

23 inserting the following:

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Interagency”;

1 (ii) by striking “A majority” and in-
2 serting the following:

3 “(2) QUORUM.—A majority”; and

4 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(3) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO
7 MEETINGS.—

8 “(A) OPEN TO PUBLIC.—Each meetings of
9 the Interagency Committee shall be open to the
10 public.

11 “(B) NOTICE OF MEETINGS.—Timely no-
12 tice of each meeting of the Interagency Com-
13 mittee shall be published in the Federal Reg-
14 ister, and the Administrator shall prescribe reg-
15 ulations to provide for other types of public no-
16 tice to insure that all interested persons are no-
17 tified of each meeting in advance.

18 “(C) PARTICIPATION.—Interested persons
19 shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the
20 Interagency Committee and appear before or
21 file statements with the Interagency Committee,
22 subject to such reasonable rules or regulations
23 as the Administrator may prescribe.

24 “(D) PUBLIC INSPECTION AND COPYING
25 OF RECORDS.—Subject to section 552 of title 5,

1 United States Code, the records, reports, tran-
2 scriptions, minutes, appendixes, working papers,
3 drafts, studies, agenda, or other documents
4 which were made available to or prepared for or
5 by the Interagency Committee shall be available
6 for public inspection and copying at a single lo-
7 cation in the office of the Interagency Com-
8 mittee or the Administration until the Inter-
9 agency Committee ceases to exist.

10 “(E) MINUTES.—Detailed minutes of each
11 meeting of the Interagency Committee shall
12 be—

13 “(i) kept and shall contain a record of
14 the persons present, a complete and accu-
15 rate description of matters discussed and
16 conclusions reached, and copies of all re-
17 ports received, issued, or approved by the
18 Interagency Committee; and

19 “(ii) certified for accuracy by the
20 chairperson of the Interagency Committee.

21 “(F) CLOSED SESSIONS.—

22 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraphs
23 (A) and (C) shall not apply to any portion
24 of a meeting of the Interagency Committee
25 for which the Administrator determines

1 that such portion of the meeting may be
2 closed to the public in accordance with sec-
3 tion 552b(c) of title 5, United States Code.

4 “(ii) FORM.—Any determination made
5 under clause (i) shall—

6 “(I) be in writing; and

7 “(II) contain the reasons for the
8 determination.

9 “(iii) REPORT.—If a determination is
10 made under clause (i), the Interagency
11 Committee shall issue a report, not less
12 frequently than annually, setting forth a
13 summary of the activities of the Inter-
14 agency Committee and such related mat-
15 ters as would be informative to the public
16 consistent with the policy of section 552(b)
17 of title 5, United States Code.

18 “(G) DESIGNATED OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE
19 OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—There shall be
21 designated an officer or employee of the
22 Federal Government to chair or attend
23 each meeting of the Interagency Com-
24 mittee, who shall be authorized, whenever
25 the officer or employee determines it to be

1 in the public interest, to adjourn any such
2 meeting.

3 “(ii) PROHIBITION.—The Interagency
4 Committee shall not conduct any meeting
5 in the absence of the designated officer or
6 employee of the Federal Government de-
7 scribed in clause (i).”; and

8 (C) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(d) INFORMATION FROM RESOURCE PARTNERS.—
10 The SCORE program described in section 8(c) of the
11 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(c)), women’s business
12 centers described in section 29 of such Act (15 U.S.C.
13 656), small business development centers (as defined in
14 section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)), and
15 State and local resource partners of the Administration
16 shall annually submit to the Interagency Committee, the
17 Administration, Congress, and the President findings re-
18 lated to women’s business ownership and challenges form-
19 ing, operating, and growing their business.”;

20 (2) in section 403(15 U.S.C. 7103)—

21 (A) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by striking
22 “Small Business Administration Reauthoriza-
23 tion Act of 1997” and inserting “SCORE Act
24 of 2023”; and

25 (B) in subsection (b)—

1 (i) by striking “Not later than 45
2 days after enactment of the Small Busi-
3 ness Administration Reauthorization Act of
4 1997” and inserting the following:

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days
6 after the date of enactment of the SCORE Act of
7 2023”; and

8 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-
9 lowing:

10 “(2) VACANCY.—In the event that a chair-
11 person is not appointed within the time frame re-
12 quired under paragraph (1), the Deputy Adminis-
13 trator of the Administration shall serve as acting
14 chairperson of the Interagency Committee until a
15 chairperson is appointed under paragraph (1).”; and

16 (3) in section 404 (15 U.S.C. 1704), by striking
17 “September 30, 1995” and inserting “1 year after
18 the date of enactment of the SCORE Act of 2023”.

○