



The Marque Group

A Brand Management Company

February 20, 2012

Chairperson Burdick and distinguished members of the Committee: For the Legislative Record, my name is Monique T. Norington and it is an honor to be testifying before you for a first time as both a resident of this great state and a small business owner. I also want to thank each of you for taking the time to respond back to me regarding my direct letter on this matter. While, I could have solely left an impression via email, I found it important to address you direct and with purposeful intent.

It has been long known that small business ownership creates economic growth and development and is the core of what this country was founded upon. Even more so, today I find it imperative that I urge you to invest in a new generation of local and global leaders and provide an even-playing field or as most call it, "equity" with access to capital.

On the outside it would appear that I was afforded many opportunities of advancement such as a private education, college and advanced degrees. But the reality is that I was raised by a single grandmother born in the 1930's with a 9th grade education. She worked tirelessly, sometimes 14 hour days to raise enough money to send me to private school so that I would not have to attend one of the worse public high schools in the country. She knew that giving me the chance to "access" education and "access" opportunities could possibly help me achieve greatness. And I better not screw it up!

While I have achieved some successes, there are still fierce barriers that still impede the growth and development of minority businesses in our state and county today. Like my grandmother, I sometimes work 12 hour days in my office fighting and pushing to gain access to contracts, capital and opportunities. But the reality is that, no matter how many hours I work, unless there is a viable shift towards helping businesses to gain capital to build capacity we will never see the stimulation of economic growth so urgently needed in African American community.

Committee members, it is time! And your vote and passage of SB 1586 will assist businesses like myself and other minority businesses that have the agility and ability to succeed. This bill will give us "access" to capital and the opportunity to compete in a global economy, drive innovation, competitiveness and creation of jobs.

Thank you for the work that you continue to pursue on behalf of small businesses. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

Monique T. Norington