

**Testimony of Bradley E. Pierce**  
**President of Restaurant Equipment World™ (A Pierce Sales Co., Inc.)**  
**before the**  
**Subcommittee on Competitiveness, Innovation, and Export Promotion**  
**of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation**

**October 6, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.**

Good afternoon and thank you for the honor of allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Brad Pierce and I'm speaking to you on behalf of the National Federation of Independent Businesses. I am President of a small business called Restaurant Equipment World which sells commercial restaurant equipment and supplies. We are a family owned company based in Orlando, Florida and have approximately 45 employees. Over the past 33 years, our company has sold goods to more than 75,000 customers in all 50 states and more than 100 countries internationally. Exporting has become a vital part of our business and just last week I returned from Dubai where I had meetings with clients to sell more US made goods. In the case of our company, we haven't used any of the government export programs and have instead forged this road on our own. This was the area which I wanted to talk with you today. It seems that there is a lack of communication with small businesses that these programs are even available. I think that the view of a majority of small business operators is that government assistance programs of this type are only focused towards large businesses. That is certainly a shame considering there are 24 million small businesses which create approximately 80% of the new jobs in this country.

The good news is the ability to export goods from our county is a process which isn't broken, since we've yet to have any issues exporting to wherever our customers have asked us to. With the help of knowledgeable freight forwarders and customs agents, it's quite a palatable process which has paid huge dividends to our company. The only real caveat we've run into is in regards to the lack of protection against fraud and intellectual property when dealing internationally. That problem however runs deeper and even exists domestically as well with law enforcement agencies being ill-equipped to assist small businesses. Aside from these issues, overall, the ability for US companies to actually move goods and export products globally works very well.

While we've been successful in exporting through the trials and tribulations of doing it ourselves, many other small businesses haven't been so fortunate and in many cases don't even know where to begin. To change this tide, I would like to see the US government take a more proactive role in regards of exporting. In this troubled economy I see how much our business has been aided by exports, to not only survive, but to grow as a business. I would certainly like to see other companies benefit in this same manner.

I believe the best way to accomplish this is by developing outreach programs through groups such as the NFIB and local business licensing organizations. It's important to publicize that assistance programs are readily accessible to small businesses, effective, and are easy process to engage. I feel many small business operators in this country generally view government assistance program as being laden with red tape and additional burdens including countless forms and procedures, thereby causing companies to shy away from them to spend time on more efficient activities. This perception needs to be changed. Small business operators need to be informed that these government programs are truly here to help you and partner with you to make your businesses stronger and in turn our entire nation stronger. That message will make people such as myself and other small business operators actually embrace what you're promoting rather than writing off the idea of participating. Providing meaningful testimonials and metrics with success stories in any promotional materials will certainly aid in developing a feeling that these programs are worthwhile to engage. I truly believe that as partners with the US government working hand in hand together, we can certainly increase our export trade. This will save U.S. jobs, provide an increase in revenue, help for us to recover faster from the current economic downturn, and make us strong as a nation. Thank you for allowing me to address you today.

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