

## **TESTIMONY – Appropriations Committee Public Hearing March 2, 2015**

Good evening members of the Appropriations Committee. It is an honor to speak before you today. My name is Khnemet Serrano and I am the owner of Color Body Art Studio, LLC based in Stamford, Connecticut. I am here to testify on behalf of the Women's Business Development Council (WBDC) and ask you to reinstate the funding for this important organization.

As this committee already knows, small businesses and entrepreneurs are the backbone of America's economy, creating 65 percent or more of new jobs in our country each year. In fact, women owned small businesses are expected to create almost 60 percent of projected 18 million new jobs to be created by 2018.

I began working with WBDC in January of 2013. I had been in business for nearly three years and I knew if I wanted to grow my operations and expand my offerings I would need additional support. Though I had been running my business for several years, I did not have a formalized business plan, and I was working without a structured end goal. I met with a WBDC business counselor who directed me to attend Passion to Profit, one of WBDC's critical entrepreneurial training classes. Over the next nine weeks, I worked closely with the faculty and my peers to create my business plan. Empowered with my formalized plan, I am now working with WBDC to explore funding options available to small business owners, such as the Connecticut Small Business Express and Department of Economic and Community Development loan programs, which will allow me to hire additional staff and broaden my offerings. In addition to the fundamental planning assistance for my business, WBDC has helped me to expand my business and reach new clients. I have

participated in several marketing classes offered by WBDC, including Marketing Your Business on a Shoe String which acknowledges the financial constraints of small business owners. In addition to WBDC's understanding of the training needs of a small business owner, they also understand the time constraints that a business owner has. I was able to take a class with WBDC on a weekend, when I was able to have coverage at my shop.

I believe it is imperative to continue to fund WBDC's training and education programs for women entrepreneurs and provide them with the tools they need to help them create jobs, grow their businesses and succeed as tax payers in Connecticut.

This concludes my prepared statement. Thank you for your commitment to Connecticut's Small Businesses and for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

## **CONTACT INFO**

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