



Office of the Press Secretary

Statement by the President

Concerning Contracting Opportunities with Disadvantaged Businesses

I am pleased today to sign an Executive Order strengthening our efforts to increase contracting opportunities between the federal government and disadvantaged businesses -- in particular, Small Disadvantaged Businesses, 8(a) Businesses, and Minority Business Enterprises. These businesses play a vital role in our nation's economy, but historically have been underutilized and at times shut out of federal procurement opportunities.

Accordingly, this Executive Order directs federal departments and agencies with procurement authority to take aggressive and specific affirmative actions to ensure inclusion of disadvantaged businesses in federal contracting.

I want to thank Representatives Kilpatrick, Menendez, Velazquez, and Wynn, and the many others who have worked with us to ensure that the private sector recognizes the importance and utility of contracting with disadvantaged businesses. I particularly commend those members of the advertising community who are working to increase the representation of minorities within advertising -- both on the creative end and in transmission to the public. It is critical that the private sector help lead this effort and take advantage of the diverse and creative views that underrepresented groups will bring to the advertising process. I want to commend the American Advertising Federation (AAF) for responding to the Vice President's challenge and working with interested parties to develop the Principles for Effective Advertising in the American Multicultural Marketplace, a strategic plan for boosting mi-

nority representation in the advertising industry.

Certainly, the federal government must play a leading role as well. Advertising and the broader information technology industries play an increasingly expansive role in our society. Therefore, in this Executive Order, I am directing each federal department and agency to ensure that all creation, placement, and transmission of federal advertising is fully reflective of the nation's diversity. Further, this Executive Order directs each federal department and agency to take clearly defined and aggressive steps to ensure small and disadvantaged business participation in procurement of information technology and telecommunications contracts.

This Executive Order will ensure that federal departments and agencies are held accountable on these issues. It does so by clearly listing the responsibilities and obligations of each agency to expand opportunities for disadvantaged businesses and requires the agencies to report to me within 90 days of the issuance of this order the steps they plan to take to increase contracting with disadvantaged businesses. Subsequently, the agencies will be required to submit annual reports on their ongoing efforts in this area to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to ensure at the highest levels the Executive Branch will sustain unflagging and aggressive efforts to achieve this important goal.

Editor's Note: This information is in the public domain at www.whitehouse.gov/library/hot_releases/index.html.