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OPINION POLL: SMALL BUSINESSES SAY WEAK CUSTOMER DEMAND, NOT REGULATIONS, THEIR PROBLEM

National poll finds 78 percent of small businesses say regulations needed to protect small businesses from unfair competition, level playing field with big business; 86 percent see regulations as necessary part of a modern economy

Washington, DC – Small business owners say their main concern is weak customer demand, not regulations, according to independent opinion polling released today. In fact, when asked what would do the most to create jobs, small business owners' top response was eliminating incentives to move jobs overseas. Reducing regulation came in fifth place.

Small business owners see government standards as an important tool to level the playing field with big business. In addition to protecting small businesses the vast majority of owners view regulations as a necessary component of a modern economy. [Click here](#) to read the report, based on a national survey of 500 small business owners, released today by the [American Sustainable Business Council](#), [Main Street Alliance](#) and [Small Business Majority](#).

"These survey results underscore what Main Street small business owners have been saying all along: we need more customers, more demand, not deregulation," said Jim Houser, owner of Hawthorne Auto Clinic in Portland, Oregon, and a leader with the Main Street Alliance. "In fact, I've seen first-hand from over 35 years in the auto industry that smart standards help create jobs and promote innovation in the U.S. economy."

"Despite the heated rhetoric, regulations simply aren't small businesses' top concern," said John Arensmeyer, founder and CEO of Small Business Majority. "Small businesses can be the jobs engine we need to jumpstart the economy, but not if legislators are focusing on something that isn't their top problem. Policymakers should listen to what real small businesses are saying and act accordingly."

"With football at the top of everyone's mind, if we played the game with no rules the Super Bowl winner would come down to which team was bigger or willing to play dirtier," said Frank Knapp, Jr., Vice Chair of the American Sustainable Business Council and president and CEO of the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce. "Well, regulations are the rules of the game we call private sector competition. An overwhelming percent of small business owners agree that without fair regulations creating a level playing field, small businesses won't be able to compete against big businesses. From our perspective, the effort to kill regulations is big businesses' way of rigging the game in their favor."

Key findings from the survey include:

- Small business owners see their top problem as weak customer demand, not regulations: 34 percent cited weak customer demand as the most important problem for their business, while only 14 percent named government regulations.
- On the question of what would do the most to create jobs, cutting regulations came in low on the list: the top response was eliminating incentives to move jobs overseas at 24 percent; reducing regulation was fifth at 10 percent.
- Small business owners see an important role for standards and safeguards: 78 percent believe some standards are important to protect small businesses from unfair competition, and 76 percent believe regulations on the books should be enforced.
- Small business owners see regulations as necessary for a modern economy: 93 percent agree their business can live with some regulation if it is fair, manageable and reasonable.
- Small business owners express strong support for specific rules and standards: 78 percent support rules to prevent health insurance companies from increasing rates excessively, 84 percent support food safety standards, 80 percent support product safety standards and 80 percent support disclosure and regulation of toxic materials.
- Small business owners support clean energy policies: 79 percent support ensuring clean air and water, and 61 percent support moving the country towards energy efficiency and clean energy.
- Small businesses believe in streamlining government processes: 73 percent of respondents believe we should allow for one-stop electronic filing of government paperwork.

For more information on these poll findings, visit:

http://www.asbcouncil.org/poll_regulations.html
<http://mainstreetalliance.org/5511/poll-regs-economy/>
http://smallbusinessmajority.org/small-business-research/downloads/020112_Regulations_Poll_Report.pdf

Poll results reported in this statement represent findings from an Internet survey of 500 small business owners nationwide, commissioned by the American Sustainable Business Council, Main Street Alliance and Small Business Majority, and conducted by Lake Research Partners. The survey was conducted between December 8, 2011, and January 4, 2012. It has a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.

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The American Sustainable Business Council is a network of business organizations representing over 100,000 companies and 200,000 business leaders. ASBC advocates for public policies that meet the realities of the 21st century global economy including strategic investments in workforce and infrastructure; standards and safeguards that promote innovation, prevent abuse and protect critical resources; and a new sustainable economic model that fosters a growing, economically-secure middle class. www.asbcouncil.org

The Main Street Alliance is a national network of state-based small business coalitions. MSA creates opportunities for small business owners to speak for themselves on issues that impact their businesses and local economies. www.mainstreetalliance.org

Small Business Majority is a national nonpartisan small business advocacy organization, founded and run by small business owners, and focused on solving the biggest problems facing America's 28 million small businesses. We conduct extensive opinion and economic research and work with small business owners, policy experts and elected officials nationwide to bring small business voices to the public policy table. www.smallbusinessmajority.org