

April 2, 2003

Akin Chairs Hearing on "Small Business Advocacy and Improvement Act of 2003"
Bill seeks to strengthen the voice of small business in Washington

Washington, D.C. - Today, Congressman Todd Akin (R-Mo), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Workforce, Empowerment and Government Programs chaired a joint hearing with the Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform on Small Business. The hearing focused on increasing the effectiveness of the Office of Advocacy by strengthening it through the "Small Business Advocacy and Improvement Act of 2003", a bill to be introduced by Congressman Akin."

The Office of Advocacy, which was established in 1976, represents small business in the regulatory process. "The Office of Advocacy is the voice for small business in government," said Akin. "By advancing the views, concerns and interests of small business before the Congress, the White House and federal regulatory agencies, the Office of Advocacy performs an invaluable service, saving small business literally millions of dollars every year."

The subcommittee received testimony on the impact of regulation on small business and the importance of the Office of Advocacy. "Advocacy is one of the first lines of defense that NFIB's members, and small businesses in general, have to fight against the ever-increasing encroachment of federal regulations in their lives," said Andrew Langer of the National Federation of Independent Business.

Testifying on the critical role of the office, Giovanni Coratolo of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce stated that, "we have seen the growing necessity to have a strong independent small business advocate within the executive branch of government armed with the tools to work effectively on behalf of small business within the administration."

The Chief Counsel, Mr. Tom Sullivan, also testified in favor of the bill.

In response to the need for improvements to the Office of Advocacy, Congressman Todd Akin along with Congressman Edward Schrock (R-Va), Chairman of the Regulatory Reform and Oversight Committee on Small Business, will introduce the Small Business Advocacy and Improvement Act of 2003.

"In an effort to increase the effectiveness of the Office of Advocacy, Mr. Schrock and I will be introducing the Small Business Advocacy Improvement Act of 2003," said Congressman Akin in his opening statement.

The Bill will:

- Establish an independent line-item for the Office of Advocacy, in order to help establish the offices independence;

- Enable the President to appoint the office's General Counsel; and
- Limit the Chief Counsel to serving only as long as the term of the President by whom he or she was appointed.