



## Heitkamp Leads First Hearing of New Congress on her Subcommittee, Pushes to Help North Dakota Small Businesses

*As Top Democrat on Subcommittee for Last 2 Years, Senator Has Fought to Boost Small Businesses through Bipartisan, Commonsense Regulatory Reform*

*\*\*Click here for [video](#), [audio](#) of the hearing\*\**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp, the top Democrat on the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, today helped lead the subcommittee's first hearing of the new Congress alongside Republican Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma. Heitkamp and Lankford have led this subcommittee of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee together since 2015.

The hearing focused on how to make sure small businesses get the regulatory assistance they need from federal agencies and that the needs of small businesses are considered when developing new regulations. In North Dakota, 96 percent of businesses are small businesses, and Heitkamp has long worked to achieve bipartisan reform that leads to better regulatory outcomes for those businesses.

At the hearing, Heitkamp submitted testimony for the record from Kari Warberg Block, the CEO and founder of EarthKind, a North Dakota small business.

"Small businesses are the backbone of North Dakota's economy—creating good-paying jobs, strengthening our communities, and supporting our families," **said Heitkamp**. "This hearing is important because small businesses, which are the fabric of our state, are too often at a disadvantage compared to large corporations when it comes to federal regulations. North Dakota small business owners want to create safe products that comply with federal regulations. But when I visit small businesses across North Dakota, entrepreneurs like Kari tell me it can be tough to get the information they need to understand and adhere to regulations. Our focus should be on making regulations better by getting early feedback from impacted

small businesses, and helping folks understand how best to comply with regulations that are designed to keep families and communities safe.”

“My story as a small business owner is like many others: I found a solution to a problem—and with little more than an idea and a lot of passion, I turned it into a thriving business,” said **Warberg Block**. “But for many small business owners, navigating complex federal regulations is daunting and sometimes impossible. As a North Dakota small business owner, I appreciate Senator Heitkamp inviting me share how regulations can challenge entrepreneurs. Having founded a business that develops natural pest control solutions, I understand the importance of federal regulations intended to make sure products are safe for families. However, those regulations need to be smarter and there should be more help for small business owners like myself so that, when it comes to complying with federal regulations, we aren’t at a disadvantage compared to big businesses.”

The hearing was titled “Improving Small Business Input on Federal Regulations: Ideas for Congress and a New Administration,” and examined how agencies consider the impact of regulations on small businesses. Heitkamp asked witnesses about what the federal government can do to promote transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in the regulatory process.

Earlier this month, Heitkamp [met with the incoming administration’s nominee to lead the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to discuss ways to improve the federal regulatory system.](#)

In 2015, Heitkamp and Lankford [introduced](#) and [passed through their committee](#) a package of commonsense regulatory reform bills to promote transparency and accountability, including the [Smarter Regulations Through Advance Planning and Review Act](#), which would require agencies to conduct regular mandatory retrospective reviews. Retrospective reviews in which agencies reassess their regulations help make sure regulations are meeting their objectives and are not causing unnecessary costs.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Heitkamp has pushed to make sure North Dakota small businesses’ and entrepreneurs’ voices are heard. Just last month, the president [signed into law](#) her [SEC Small Business Advocate Act](#) will make sure small businesses have a strong voice on federal rules that apply to private enterprises. It will create an Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation within the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to help small businesses and startups advocate for policies that help them build investments in their companies as well as jobs across the country.

Heitkamp has also worked to better support rural startups, introducing the [Startup Entrepreneur Empowerment Delivery \(SEED\) Act](#) in March 2016. By creating a federal pilot program granting up to \$120,000 in federal funds to ten small cities across the country, Heitkamp’s *SEED Act* would invest in communities with populations of 200,000 or less with the aim of identifying and promoting innovative ideas emerging in more rural communities outside of New York and Silicon Valley.