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Senator Begich, thank you for having me here today. My name is Calvin Goings and I am the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Regional Administrator for Region 10, which covers Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska.

It is an honor to be in Alaska and to testify before the Committee on SBA's efforts to support veteran entrepreneurs throughout the country and across this great state.

Two of America's greatest assets are the service of our veterans and the economic dynamism of our small businesses. Our nation's 28 million small businesses employ half of the private sector workforce and are responsible for creating two out of every three net new private sector jobs in our communities.

As small business owners, veterans continue to serve our country by creating critical employment opportunities and driving economic growth. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, nearly one in ten small businesses are veteran-owned. These businesses generate about \$1.2 trillion in receipts and employ nearly 5.8 million Americans.

Research also demonstrates that veterans over index in entrepreneurship. In the private sector workforce, veterans are at least 45 percent more likely than those with no active-duty military experience to be self-employed.

So at SBA, we are focused on ensuring that these veterans have the resources they need to start and grow successful businesses and create jobs.

One of the agency's key functions is to support loans to small businesses that have challenges obtaining credit in the conventional market. Our loan programs have a strong track record of leveraging billions of dollars in credit to help entrepreneurs launch and grow their companies and hire

new employees. Here in Alaska, SBA has supported more than \$7 million in loans since Fiscal Year 2012.

Nationally, SBA approved more than 3,200 loans to veteran-owned businesses, supporting more than \$2.1 billion in Fiscal Year 2012. And our Patriot Express Loan program, which offers loans with streamlined documentation and expedited processing to members of the veteran and military community, has supported nearly \$580 million in lending to veteran entrepreneurs and small business owners over the past four years.

Moreover, SBA has challenged the top national and regional lenders to pledge to increase their lending activity to veterans by five percent each year for the next five years. With this support from our lending partners, SBA will serve an additional 2,000 veterans and increase lending by \$475 million.

SBA also provides entrepreneurs with counseling and training resources across the country. Our data show that small business owners who have a long-term counselor are more likely to hire, grow, and increase revenues. During Fiscal Year 2012, SBA Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs), and SCORE chapters counseled over 28,000 veterans and service-disabled veterans nationwide. And here in Alaska, countless veterans have taken advantage of our strong network of resource partners throughout the state.

In addition to our capital and counseling programs, SBA also supports small businesses engaged in federal contracting. We are responsible for ensuring that 23 percent of federal contracting dollars go to small businesses, and furthermore, that three percent of federal contracting dollars go to Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). In Fiscal Year 2012, we helped SDVOSBs access more than \$12.56 billion or 3.03 percent of total federal contract spending. This is an increase of more than \$1 billion in federal prime contracts from Fiscal Year 2011 and is the 6th consecutive year that we have increased the amount of federal contracting going to these veteran-owned businesses.

Coldfoot Environmental Services, Inc., located here in Anchorage, is a great example of a company that has thrived with the help of SBA's programs. Founded in 2001, Coldfoot is a minority and service-disabled veteran-owned, 8(a)-certified business that specializes in construction, demolition, environmental cleanup, and hazardous materials abatement on military installations throughout Alaska. Leveraging our programs, the company now has 38 employees and averages more than \$2.8 million in revenues.

While we are proud of our successes, we continue to develop new ways to assist more aspiring veteran entrepreneurs. Over the next few years, more than 250,000 service members will transition into civilian life annually. And these veterans possess the skills, experience, and leadership to start businesses and create jobs in their communities. So, our goal is to give each of these men and women the tools they need to make informed decisions about whether they should pursue small business ownership.

As part of this effort, on January 1, 2013, SBA began rolling out "Operation Boots to Business: From Service to Startup." A nationwide entrepreneurship training program, Boots to Business is offered as a component of the Department of Defense's redesigned Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Boots to Business allows Active Duty military members separating from military service, as well as their spouses, to elect to participate in an intensive two-day class that educates participants on business fundamentals and guides them through an initial feasibility analysis of their business concept. Upon completion of the class, participants have the option to further study through an instructor-led, eight-week online course that includes developing a business plan.

The program provides entrepreneurial training to transitioning service members from all branches of the Armed Forces and, by the end of the year, will be offered at 151 military locations across the country. If the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget request level is funded, we plan to significantly ramp up the program. While we have already administered 10 classes in

Alaska at Joint Base Elemendorf, this is just a small fraction of the demand. If we receive our budget for Fiscal Year 2014 and Boots to Business is fully funded, SBA will increase class offerings to meet the need on bases in Alaska and beyond.

At SBA, and across the Administration, we are committed to helping our service men and women achieve the American Dream they fought so valiantly to defend. As they return home to Alaska and communities throughout the country, we will be there to support their entrepreneurial aspirations and provide the resources they need to start and grow companies and create jobs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I am happy to answer any questions.