

Testimony of Theresa Alfaro Daytner  
May 21, 2009  
U.S. Senate Small Business Committee

Good Morning Senators Snowe, Landrieu, Cardin, committee members, staffers and guests. It was an honor to meet with you, Senators Landrieu and Snowe, on March 16<sup>th</sup> at the White House with President Obama and Secretary Geithner to discuss Small Business issues and hear about the President's plans to support the SBA and expand lending and surety guarantee programs. Thank you for inviting me today as a witness on behalf of small business owners across this amazing country of ours.

My name is Theresa Alfaro Daytner and I am an entrepreneur, from Mt. Airy, Maryland. I grew up in nearby Greenbelt, Maryland with an entrepreneurial father who owned several beauty salons and a cosmetology school on Main Street in Laurel. Mom studied geology in college while I was growing up and became a public high school teacher. I started my first business in 1989, a residential roofing company, while finishing my accounting degree, raising my first child, studying for the CPA exam and embarking on my first "real" job with a highly respected D.C. CPA firm downtown on Connecticut Avenue. As a Latina and the oldest daughter, I was also helping Papi and Mami who had recently been diagnosed with Prostate Cancer and Multiple Sclerosis, respectively. I found the traditional career path of the corporate world did not share the same family values and creative resourcefulness that I was so passionate about. My generational Dagwood "sandwich" coincided with the need to support a family...and leave an unsupportive marriage. I believe my experience is similar to many women entrepreneurs who are torn between raising families, caring for parents, economic survival and oh,

yeah, creating a life full of passion, purpose and joy. This experience confirmed, in my mind, that I made a terrible employee.

As a single mother, dedicated daughter and rehabbing a rebuilt knee (sorry, that's a story for another day), I was working full-time for a general contractor that allowed me a short commute and a "paycheck job", that is only 40 hours a week vs. the 60+ hours I was working at the CPA firm. This "spare" time allowed me to finish studying and sit for the CPA exam. I passed the entire exam first sitting. So, not only did I get to see how a growing and reputable Commercial General Contractor operated from the inside out, but I also met the love of my life, Allen Daytner, and obtained the credentials and experience to start my next 2 businesses; a CPA practice that I operated for almost 11 years through 4 more newborns, a consolidated multi-generational home, a marriage and addition of a step-daughter...and my current company that I started in January 2003, a commercial Construction Management and General Contracting company, The Daytner Corporation, doing business as, Daytner Construction Group. Yes, the total is 6 children. They are now 23, 21, 14, 11 and twin 8 yr olds. The older 4 are girls, the fraternal twins are boys. The 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter is getting married this June.

Many small businesses across the country have stories similar mine. Mostly, we share a desire to create our own destiny.

I spent years building a strong, successful business before pursuing the Federal Government as a potential new client. In 2005, I became an SBA 8(a) certified company and was awarded our first Federal contract with the US Navy, utilizing this contract vehicle. Last year, 2008, my company grossed \$1.4M in gross revenue. All revenue was for construction management services, as we had not pursued bonding for "at risk"

general contracting projects and less than 50% was for Federal clients. We do a lot of work in higher education and the private sector.

This year, with the combination of expanding into general contracting and Federal opportunities in our region, many created by the President's Stimulus and Recovery Plan, we will have a break out year. To date, we have contracts in place for over \$800k in services, and are projecting at least \$7M in new contracts in general contracting. It's only May. This projection is based on proposals we are currently submitting and negotiating and does not include new opportunities arising between June and September 30<sup>th</sup>. We are extremely fortunate to benefit from the 8(a) Business Development program.

I am excited and honored to be a good steward of these public funds and projects. In fact, one recent day after contemplating being the recipient of U.S. tax dollars for projects on a U.S. Military installation, I drove my Mazda to my local Ford dealer to discuss trading for a Ford Escape hybrid.

I believe in walking the talk. We are a family-friendly workplace, providing a complete suite of benefits for our employees, including 100% employer-provided health care insurance for the entire family.

The Federal contracts in front of us, some being products of the Stimulus Package, will afford me the opportunity to hire more people and more subcontractors, purchase more goods from local merchants and continue sowing seeds of hope through economic seepage back into my community. I could go on forever about the promotional products I just bought from my girlfriend in Boulder, Colorado...who has hit hard times. Or the Service-Disabled Vet brother I just hired to drive here from Boise, Idaho after being laid

off...to finish my basement. Not to mention the plumber, electrician and drywall finishers that we hired, or the sister I hired to paint, in an effort to support her dream of completing cosmetology school. I don't have all these contracts in hand yet, but I'm willing to pay it forward, and I am optimistic about being well positioned to secure Federal contracts and deliver excellent results.

Finally, I am grateful for the support and guidance of my family and leaders and peers in programs such as the Make Mine A Million \$ Business Program, supported by Count Me In and OPEN from American Express, and Dartmouth's Minority Executive Education programs at the Tuck School of Business, in conjunction with MBDA. The opportunity to be included in these communities has given me the vision and strength to reach higher and dream bigger, while developing a deeper sense of purpose to improve upon the quality of life for families in the U.S.

Thank you for your time and attention and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.