



24 August 2021

Nydia Velazquez, Chair  
Committee on Small Business  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2361 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

*Re: H.R. 4956, A bill to establish a program to support the participation of small businesses in meetings and proceedings of global standards organizations, and for other purposes.*

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez,

IEEE-USA is pleased to support H.R. 4956 which implements one of the recommendations of the Final Report of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI). By giving small businesses a voice in global standards organizations, this bill encourages innovation, promotes economic competitiveness, and creates high-value jobs in the United States.

The NSCAI called for the establishment of a coordinated grant program between NIST and the Small Business Administration to enable the participation of small and medium-sized U.S. companies in standards development. By encouraging these non-traditional players to participate, we increase the diversity of voices and democratize the standards development process, thus strengthening the open markets in which the US is highly competitive.

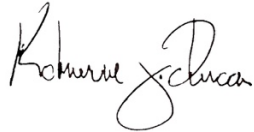
As the NSCAI noted, the United States and its allies should lead the discussion on development of global technical standardization and “help overcome information asymmetries and clarify objectives for technical standards ... that foster economic growth, protect consumers, and safeguard democratic values.” Partnerships, global and diverse participation, and information-sharing are critical to ensure “the neutrality of international standards-setting bodies.” We agree that providing access for American small and medium sized entities – voices that may not participate due to the burdensome but necessary investment of staff time and money – to an SDO working group will likely improve the quality of the ensuing standards.

H.R. 4956’s grant program assists US businesses with the high costs of participating in standards development, including conducting relevant research, developing requisite skills and expertise, preparing standards proposals, and attending technical standards-setting meetings. The alternative is limited US participation in standards development and thus a decreasing ability of US small businesses to participate in the innovation economy.

IEEE-USA, the Washington office of IEEE, Inc., the world’s largest technical organization and a standards developer, represents the approximately 150,000 IEEE members working as engineers, scientists, and allied professionals in the US. Our members work in all sectors of the US economy including government, academia, and businesses from large multinationals to the latest small startups.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these comments further, please do not hesitate to contact Erica Wissolik at (202) 530-8347 or [e.wissolik@ieee.org](mailto:e.wissolik@ieee.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Katherine Duncan  
IEEE-USA President

CC:

House Committee on Small Business Ranking Member, Blaine Luetkemeyer

Rep. C. Scott Franklin

Rep. Jerry McNerney

Rep. Jay Obernolte

Rep. Jason Crow