



News Release

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Esther H. Vassar Named SBA's National Ombudsman

WASHINGTON – Esther H. Vassar has been appointed National Ombudsman and assistant administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness for the U.S. Small Business Administration by SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills.

“With her experience managing a state regulatory agency, Esther Vassar brings to the National Ombudsman’s office first-hand knowledge of what it takes to build partnerships between government and business,” said Administrator Mills. “The office of the National Ombudsman is a good match for Esther’s talents, and I have no doubt she will contribute greatly to improved cooperation between small business and federal regulatory agencies.”

Vassar most recently served as commissioner and chair for Virginia’s Alcohol Beverage Control Board. Appointed to a four-year term by Governor Mark Warner in 2002, she directed all aspects of sales and regulation of alcoholic beverages in Virginia. Reappointed as chair in 2006 by Governor Tim Kaine, Vassar led underage drinking and driving public service campaigns, and established partnerships with the U.S. Army and the Norfolk Naval Base to provide information to military personnel about the prevention of alcohol abuse and drunk driving.

From 1994 to 2002 she ran E.H. Vassar Enterprises, a marketing firm whose clients included Dominion Virginia Power and the City of Richmond. Before starting her own company she was director of the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise in Governor L. Douglas Wilder’s administration.

The Office of the National Ombudsman assists small businesses when they experience excessive or unfair federal regulatory enforcement actions, such as repetitive audits or excessive fines and other unfair actions by a federal agency. Established in 1996 with the passage of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, the National Ombudsman’s office collaborates with 10 regional fairness boards, served by 50 small business owners from across the country.

The National Ombudsman’s office also works closely with more than 35 federal regulatory agencies to resolve complaints about excessive enforcement of federal regulations during hearings held in cities nationwide. Additional information about the Office of the National Ombudsman is available at www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

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