



News Release

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Nicholas Owens Named SBA's National Ombudsman

WASHINGTON – Nicholas N. Owens has been appointed National Ombudsman for the U.S. Small Business Administration by SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto.

In his role as SBA's fifth National Ombudsman, Owens will lead the national effort on behalf of the country's small businesses to ensure fairness in the enforcement of federal regulations. The National Ombudsman is empowered to receive, substantiate and report to Congress complaints and comments from small business owners about regulatory enforcement actions taken against small businesses by federal agencies.

"Nicholas Owens brings to the National Ombudsman's office a solid background in economic policy, and a first-hand knowledge of the regulatory challenges faced by business owners," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "The office of the National Ombudsman is a good match for his talents, and there's no doubt that he will contribute greatly to improved communications and diminished disputes between small business and federal regulatory agencies."

The National Ombudsman's office works closely with more than 35 federal regulatory agencies to resolve complaints about excessive enforcement of federal regulations during hearings held in cities nationwide. Established in 1996 with the passage of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, the National Ombudsman's office works with 10 regional fairness boards whose membership is drawn from 50 small business owners from across the country.

In 1996 Owens, a native of Wiggins, Mississippi, founded Nicomm Group, a public affairs, communications and government relations firm based in Mississippi. Nicomm's clients included national healthcare companies, Internet Technology companies and financial institutions. In 2000, he was named vice president of sales and marketing for Nashville-based, Healthcare Technology Solutions Corporation.

Before his appointment as the National Ombudsman, Owens served five years as a special assistant to the chairman and director of external affairs for the National Credit Union Administration. In that position he directed the agency's public affairs staff, served as a senior advisor on press, congressional and policy issues, and was a liaison to the White House on policy and presidential personnel matters. Owens also coordinated the NCUA's "Access Across America" economic empowerment initiative.

For more information about the Office of the National Ombudsman, visit the Web site at www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

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