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BDPA, formerly known as Black Data Processing Associates, was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1975 to promote professional growth and technical development to those in or entering information and communications technology (ICT) career fields and related industries.

Now in its 43rd year (Volume XLIII) National BDPA (NBDPA) and participating local BDPA Chapters publish daily and weekly blogs with quarterly or monthly newsletters. For bdpatoday or web banner advertising rates, publication schedules, and online calendars with Industry events, contact regional offices or local BDPA Chapters by visiting bdpa.org or bdpatoday.com.

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WASHINGTON 05.06.19 — The House and Senate are in session this week. Key bills on the House floor this week include a revised $17.2 billion FY2019 emergency supplemental appropriations bill that includes funds for recent Midwest flood damage and a bill to prohibit the Trump Administration from granting waivers to states to allow them to establish so-called “junk” health care plans that may lack protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The Senate is also working on its version of the FY2019 supplemental, which reportedly includes an extra $304 million in block grant funding for Puerto Rico to help rebuild after 2017’s Hurricane Maria.

Later this week, the full House Appropriations Committee will consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 $189.8 billion bill that includes money for the Education Department. House Democrats are seeking a 6 percent funding increase for the Department for fiscal 2020. They flatly rejected nearly all the cuts the Trump administration has proposed. 

Ron Hamm provides federal government relations, strategic counsel, and consulting to education, municipal, and private sector clients with a focus on returning value to the client. Ron applies a collaborative and hands-on approach to client management, providing advice and counsel on issues concerning higher education, research and development (R&D), economic and community development, tax, transportation, broadband, and government marketing. He formulates and executes strategies to secure federal funding, legislation, and regulatory changes that support HCG’s client priorities.

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WASHINGTON—On May 8, 2019, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) formally introduced a bill that she and others hope will help to stop federal agencies from overlooking Black-, other minority-, and women-owned businesses when establishing advertising contracts.

The “Federal Government Advertising Equity Accountability Act”, formerly H.R. 7215, was reintroduced in the 116th Congress as H.R. 2576. The new bill requests and requires all federal agencies to include in their annual budget justifications the amount spent on advertising contracts with Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs) and businesses owned by Blacks, women and other minorities in the previous fiscal year.

Bill Co-Sponsors
The legislation, which is co-sponsored by California Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Wisconsin Democratic Congresswoman Gwen Moore, also requires that each agency provide projections of their spending for the upcoming fiscal year.

“The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) applauds and salutes the outstanding leadership of Congresswoman Norton for introducing one of the most important Congressional bills to potentially benefit the Black Press of America,” said NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

“For too long, millions of annual federal advertising dollars have not been spent with Black-, other minority- and women-owned newspapers and media businesses,” Chavis said.

See Advertising on page 7
Chavis also thanked Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Gwen Moore (D-WI) for co-sponsoring “this game-changing legislation.”

“We further thank Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chair, Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA), and all the members of the CBC for their resolute support of the Black Press of America,” he said.

**Appropriations Bills**

Norton and Lee also sent letters to all 12 House appropriations subcommittees requesting that they direct each agency under their jurisdiction to include the pertinent information in their fiscal year 2021 budget justifications.

An accompanying House fiscal year 2020 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill – the first fiscal year 2020 report released thus far and the second largest appropriations bill – further directs the agencies to include data in their fiscal year 2021 budget justifications.

“As the largest advertiser in the United States, the federal government has an obligation to ensure fair access for minority and women-owned media companies,” said Norton, who earlier this month was ranked as the most effective House Democrat by the Center for Effective Lawmaking.

Led by professors at the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University, the Center for Effective Lawmaking defines legislative effectiveness as the “proven ability to advance a member’s agenda items through the legislative process and into law.”

It’s that reason that Norton and the nation’s Black-, other minority- and women-owned media companies are optimistic that her proposed legislation will aid their businesses, which have long played a vital role in local communities.

“My bill would ensure that federal agencies are striving to reach minorities and women, who often get their news from outlets that serve more specific communities,” Norton said.

Lee added that it’s important that federal agencies comply.

She said that African American-, women-, and other minority-owned businesses should always have a seat at the table when it comes to government advertising and contracts.

**GAO Findings**

In 2016, Norton led members of Congress in requesting a Government Accounting Office (GAO) report on their advertising contracts.

Released in July 2018, the GAO report showed that, in fiscal year 2017, only 16 percent of the federal government’s advertising contract obligations went to businesses owned by minorities and women.

“In 2017, the GAO examined spending on advertising contracts with minority-owned businesses by five agencies – the Department of Defense, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of the Interior, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration – and found that only five percent of the $4.3 billion available for advertising contracts went to minority businesses,” Norton said.

“In light of these concerning figures, we, and several Members, sent a letter to the GAO in April 2016 requesting updated information on the amount of federal advertising dollars spent with SDBs and businesses owned by minorities and women,” she said.

“The GAO’s findings make it clear that there is still much progress to be made,” Norton said.

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Correspondent

Photos: Dr. Eleanor Holmes Norton and NNPA.

Learn how government tech and media contracts could generate millions for NAHP and NNPA publishers.

See related articles at bdpatoday.com.
Billionaire Robert F. Smith to pay student loans for Morehouse Class of 2019

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

ATLANTA, GA — During what will likely be seen as one of the most memorable graduation presents for parents and their children — a quiet African American billionaire delivered a welcomed surprise.

At their graduation on May 19, investor and chemical engineer Robert Smith announced he would pay off the student loan debt of Morehouse’s 2019 graduating class.

Morehouse’s graduating class is 400 strong. Smith’s graduation gift is one that will allow graduates of one of the most storied all-male historically Black college to start their careers with no student loan debt.

Given today’s statistics regarding student loan debt, this is no small gift. Morehouse officials estimate Smith estimates that his gift is worth over $40 million. “On behalf of the eight generations of my family that have been in this country, we’re gonna put a little fuel in your bus,” Smith said his speech to the class of 2019, their families and Morehouse faculty.

“My family is going to create a grant to eliminate your student loans,” Smith added.

Smith, who is an investor and tech billionaire, is the founder and CEO of private equity firm Vista Equity Partners. In 2018 he was ranked by Forbes magazine as the 163rd wealthiest person in the U.S. Smith’s net worth is estimated to be over $4.4 billion. bt

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and writer for NNPA as well as a political analyst and strategist as Principal of Win Digital Media LLC.
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The FY 2020 President’s Budget outlines a vision for change that would streamline the hiring and dismissal processes, modernize human resources technology, better utilize data to inform workforce management, rebalance labor-management relations, align Federal workforce management authorities with private sector best practices, and reduce unnecessary red tape to bring the Federal workforce into the 21st Century.

In addition to efforts to revamp hiring processes, OMB also looks to leverage the dedicated workforce already employed within Federal agencies. 
— Source: The White House, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

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