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## July Advocacy e-News

Greetings!

We are very excited to report that an Illinois health insurance cooperative is scheduled to launch in October. The Land of Lincoln Health Cooperative is poised to be a game-changer for the Illinois small business community. Read more about this below.

With respect to the SBAC's legislative efforts in Springfield this year, the Illinois General Assembly adjourned its spring 2013 session with much work left to complete. The General Assembly failed to take action on Illinois' pension crisis and did not call several common-sense bills, which would improve the economic environment for small businesses, for a vote. Rest assured that the SBAC, and our coalition, will continue to aggressively advocate for reasonable Illinois LLC fees. So long as large tax breaks are being awarded to businesses threatening to leave the State, we will also continue to push legislation allowing small business owners access to these credits. The small business community is the economic engine that drives Illinois' economy. If you are reading this e-mail, you know it is worth fighting for.

To join the policy committee, or if you have any questions, contact Blanca Campos at [Blanca@sbacil.org](mailto:Blanca@sbacil.org).

We wish everyone a Safe and Happy 4th of July!

Elliot Richardson  
SBAC CEO

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### How can the SBAC help your business grow?



Find out why over 700 businesses have joined the SBAC and watch some of our SBAC members shine in their starring roles in our [newest promotional video!](#)

Let's make this video go viral! Please make sure to like, post comments and share the video with your networks!

## Illinois Health Insurance Cooperative Update - The Launch Approaches



The SBAC formed a coalition of business and community organizations to advocate for the creation of a health insurance cooperative that would stabilize insurance premiums and provide quality care to the small business community. Through the efforts of this coalition, we secured the ability to establish a Cooperative. Subsequently, Land of Lincoln Health became the first and only consumer-operated and oriented insurance company designed to meet the needs of the small business community and others in Illinois looking for new insurance options.

The Land of Lincoln Health CO-OP will be owned and governed by its customers, thus ensuring the choices Land of Lincoln makes will be in the interest of the Cooperative's members. As a non-profit, any surplus of revenue will also be reinvested for its members' benefit and used to improve coverage, expand benefits, and stabilize premiums. Stabilizing rates will ensure that more business owners are able to afford health insurance for their employees and also provide the certainty necessary for many business owners to expand and hire.

We recently had a very productive meeting with leaders at Land of Lincoln Health and are encouraged by their plan to bring an innovative health insurance solution to the Illinois small business community and the general public. During the meeting, the folks at Land of Lincoln Health appeared dedicated to providing high quality health coverage to communities across Illinois. They also assured us that they will take the time to simplify the process of finding a plan and make it easy to compare pricing, so that folks will know exactly what they are paying for. Land of Lincoln Health will also have a high quality customer service team to help answer any question its members might have.

Open enrollment for Land of Lincoln Health plans will begin on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and become effective on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. We will provide you with additional updates as we learn more about Land of Lincoln Health and their insurance plan options.

## LLC Filing Fees



This spring session, we were laser-focused on substantially reducing Illinois' LLC fees to level the playing field for many of our businesses. Presently, the fees associated with filing and operating an LLC in Illinois are among the highest in the nation. Illinois LLC fees are also arbitrarily, and substantially, higher than those charged to Illinois corporations. Small businesses in our State, many of which understandably operate as LLCs, should not be penalized by paying nearly the highest fees in the nation, and significantly more than corporations.

The SBAC filed a bill to lower LLC fees to equal those charged to corporations. Subsequently, five other bills were introduced reducing LLC fees, including HB 2330, a bill that would reduce LLC fees by half (a slightly lower reduction than sought in the SBAC's bill). HB 2330 gained considerable momentum, receiving strong bi-partisan support and securing many co-sponsors. The General Assembly, however, took no action to reduce the unreasonably high fees charged to Illinois LLCs before their session ended.

The SBAC waged a strong advocacy campaign in support of reducing LLC fees and formed a growing coalition of business groups to support this common-sense initiative. The good news is we are just getting started! We intend on engaging in an even more robust campaign in 2014 to level the playing field for small businesses best served by operating as LLCs.

## EDGE Tax Credit Program



Millions in tax breaks are awarded each year to businesses threatening to leave Illinois. While we understand these tax credits may be necessary to keep Illinois competitive with other states, these tax credits must be accessible to small businesses and awarded in a transparent manner.

This spring, the SBAC initiated legislation that would increase the ability of small businesses to access EDGE tax credits by eliminating the capital investment requirement that presently eliminates most small companies from contention. This legislation also provided additional transparency and accountability to the process. With companies receiving millions in tax breaks for staying in Illinois, it is important we ensure these special tax incentives produce economic growth and create jobs.

This issue too received a lot of traction. There were broad areas of agreement among stakeholders including: allowing professional services firms to compete for EDGE tax credits; lowering the capital investment requirement for EDGE tax credit applicants; and ensuring that small and mid-sized businesses have a fair chance to compete for EDGE tax credits. Next session, we will continue working to ensure that these tax credits are equally available to the small business community and adequately stimulate the Illinois economy.

# Veterans Committee - Brief Survey



The mission of the SBAC Veterans Committee is to support and enhance understanding of the Veteran community through shared resources and education for both Veterans and business owners.

Our first priority is to determine if there is adequate interest from members to learn more about the benefits of hiring Veterans. The second priority, (assuming the first is true) is to create a process to enable SBAC members to effectively and efficiently recruit, hire, train, and retain veterans. We will also work to provide potential employers with the resources and contacts available to take advantage of the benefits of hiring veterans.

To facilitate the mission of the SBAC Veterans Committee, we are requesting your help and input on this VERY brief, but important survey to help guide the committee's alignment with the mission and vision of the SBAC. We recognize the diversity of the membership of the SBAC - we have members that hire employees and we have members that consult and provide professional services to companies that hire employees. So that everyone has a voice, we are asking that you respond to the questions as they are relevant to you personally or to your clients and potential clients.

Your responses will help the Veterans Committee determine your needs so that we can then provide education and resources to you, the SBAC membership and the community.

[Click Here](#) for Survey!

We thank you in advance for your time and support.

## Mission and Values of the SBAC

The SBAC is a non-partisan, member driven organization that promotes the success of small business through political advocacy, support services and educational programs.

What We Believe:

- We believe that the success of small business is a critical component of the nation's economic well being.
- We believe that in order to ensure a fair and level playing field, small business must have a powerful and united advocacy voice at the local, state and federal level.
- We believe that through cooperative networking, idea sharing

and education, small business can flourish.

**Small Business Advocacy Council**

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