

Nonprofit aims to engage small businesses in government policy

Bridget Balch

Melva Denson listened attentively to the Bring Small Businesses Back presentation put on by the Job Creators Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating workers on how government policies affect them.

Denson went from being a stay-at-home mom for more than 20 years to launching her small business, Elite Corporate Café, just last year. As a business owner hoping to grow her two-and-a-half person staff to one of 20 in the next two years, Denson attended the presentation to learn more about how she can be a good boss.

“I want to make sure my employees have a living wage and access to healthcare,” Denson said. “My passion is to have that impact on people.”

Denson was one of about 50 people that gathered at the presentation, which was co-hosted by The Woodlands Area and Conroe chambers of commerce. The Woodlands presentation was one stop on a 19-state bus tour that the Job Creators Network is using to promote the organization and inform small business owners about the resources that it offers.

“We’re going to be a voice for you,” said Alfredo Ortiz, president and chief executive officer of JCN.

“Not only on a local level, but at the state and federal level.”

Ortiz estimated that about 100 million Americans depend on small businesses for their livelihood. The non-partisan organization focuses its efforts on analyzing tax codes, regulations, healthcare and other governmental policies that affect small businesses and creating free resources for employers to educate their employees on the issues.

“We are where we are because we have an uneducated public,” Ortiz said. “We help people understand ... employees that are informed become more engaged in business.”

U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, a former chamber of commerce executive, spoke at the presentation, supporting the JCN’s efforts and condemning the “red tape” that he said the government creates, making it difficult to run a small business in this country.

Brady, who chairs the influential Ways and Means Committee, which forms legislation on taxes and trade, said that he has worked to reform the tax code and promote a plan to restructure the Internal Revenue Service.

“We’re focused on creating a tax code built for growth (of businesses),” Brady said. “We want to make

the tax code so fair and so simple that you can file on a postcard.”

Brady believes that the work the JCN is doing to get small business employees informed and engaged is vital in enacting reforms of the system.

“We’re going to need the voice of our small businesses and workers if you’re going to succeed,” Brady said. “I worry that their voice gets lost in State and U.S. Capitols ... (JCN is) trying to awaken these voices.”

For more information on the Job Creators Network, visit jcnf.org.