

Written Testimony for Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy

Rob Yang
Phenom, Owner

March 28, 2022

Good afternoon, Chair Noor and member of the Committee:

My name is Rob Yang and I am testifying in support of HF 4488. I am the owner of Phenom, a small business with locations in St. Paul and Minneapolis. We are a neighborhood footwear and apparel retailer.

These past two years have been extremely challenging for me and my business. My business lost everything during the civil unrest. I witnessed my American dream trampled on in front of my own eyes. On top of that, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted my business negatively by causing shortages and supply chain disruptions. I've had to lay off employees and my St. Paul location still has not reopened as of yet.

And while I knew that there was government funding for small businesses, figuring out where to go, how to apply, whether I qualified, and gathering all the necessary documents, was too time consuming for a small business like mine, especially when I was busy focusing on the day to day operations of trying to make sure my business was running.

For myself and many Asian owned small businesses, navigating government systems can be extremely challenging and time consuming, especially when for some, English is not their first language.

This is why we rely on trusted organizations like CAAL to help and support us. CAAL has been an anchor in the Asian Minnesotan community. They have built deep trust with community members, small businesses, and nonprofits. They have supported us by connecting us to policymakers and government agencies so that we can all receive a part of the pie.

I strongly support HF 4488. Thank you.