

March 1, 2021

Chair Representative Anastasia Williams House Labor Committee

1st Vice Chair Mary Messier House Labor Committee

2nd Vice Chair Karen Alzate House Labor Committee

RE: House Bill No. 5717 - Opposed

Dear Chair Williams & First Vice Chair Messier and Second Vice Chair Alzate:

As a woman engineer, I have 40 years of experience in a male dominated profession. At first, we were questioned as to whether we belonged in engineering at all. Back then we numbered 10% of the profession. In 40 years, we have made some progress, but not as much as you would think. We are still underrepresented, paid less, and less likely to be in leadership positions.

I started my own company 10 years ago after discovering that I was being paid less than my male counterparts. I wanted to go to a place where I wouldn't have to prove myself yet again as a woman in engineering. My company is that company.

The disadvantaged business status was the "leg-up" I needed to start my business. My business has been successful. We are sought after as a subconsultant due to the quality of our work and we have successfully landed some of our jobs as a prime consultant. We have won awards as SBA Woman owned business of the year, PBN's most innovative business, and several others. We are moving up the ranks of engineering businesses in the state.

We needed the DBE status to compete on a level playing field, just as any other underrepresented group needs it. This is setting the clock back for women owned businesses and would adversely affect my business. This is also a huge blow to women during the pandemic, which has affected women disproportionately.

On behalf of Steere Engineering and other women owned businesses, I oppose this legislation.

Very truly yours,

Patricia D. Steere

Patricia D. Steere, P.E.

President

 **Steere**
ENGINEERING INC