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Washington D.C. – After receiving numerous complaints from small business owners, U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter introduced legislation today to protect local job creators from predatory lawsuits alleging violations of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). By providing business owners sufficient time to evaluate and correct potential ADA violations before costly litigation starts, the ADA Notification Act effectively addresses a recurring problem in San Diego County and across the country.

“It’s often stated that small businesses are the growth engine of the American economy,” said Congressman Hunter. “In communities across the nation, it’s these local job creators that will eventually put Americans back to work and ensure the economy gets back on track – and stays there. It’s bad enough that small businesses are facing enormous challenges due to the current economic downturn. What they don’t need to contend with are any other unnecessary obstacles that impede growth and competitiveness. But that’s exactly what’s happening in San Diego with predatory ADA lawsuits.

“The ADA was intended to protect Americans with disabilities from discrimination in the workplace and guarantee access to places of public accommodation. By no means was the ADA ever intended to serve as a vehicle for personal profit, which it is now for some attorneys who continue targeting small businesses with private lawsuits. In most cases, small business owners are unaware of potential violations or even whether claims are legitimate. Some choose to settle out of court. Others endure costly litigation.

“The ADA Notification Act provides businesses with a reasonable opportunity to examine alleged violations and make necessary changes before the legal process can begin. The legislation does not relieve businesses of their obligation under the law, but rather provides an additional layer of defense against costly and frivolous lawsuits while ensuring Americans with disabilities are rightfully protected.”

The ADA Notification Act specifically provides business owners, upon receiving notice of possible ADA violations, with at least 90 days to make improvements to facilities before legal action can start.