

Dilawar Syed

Dilawar Syed is an entrepreneur, educator, and former U.S. cabinet official whose career has spanned Silicon Valley, public service, and American higher education. He served as Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration and as Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. Over a decades-long career in technology, he has led ventures in AI, software, and consumer web.



As SBA Deputy Administrator, a role he assumed following a bipartisan vote of the U.S. Senate, Dilawar helped expand access to capital, government contracting, and entrepreneurship support for small businesses, with a focus on underserved and rural communities. He also helped coordinate SBA's disaster response following Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore, and the Maui wildfires.

At the Department of State, Dilawar served as America's top commercial diplomat, championing U.S. companies in markets abroad. He mobilized private-sector support for Ukraine after Russia's invasion, advocated for strategic deals in advanced technology, energy, aviation, and defense, and advanced U.S. commercial interests through 24 bilateral engagements around the world.

Earlier in his civic journey, Dilawar was appointed by President Obama to the White House Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In California, he launched the California Entrepreneurship Task Force with the Governor's Office to connect Silicon Valley with rural communities and promote inclusive entrepreneurship.

In the private sector, Dilawar served as CEO of Lumiata, an AI healthcare company backed by Khosla Ventures and BlueCross BlueShield, and as founding President at Freshworks. Freshworks completed a successful IPO in 2021. Earlier in his career, he held leadership roles at Yahoo! and Siebel Systems.

After his public service, Dilawar has returned to his alma mater, The University of Texas at Austin, as faculty at McCombs School of Business and the LBJ School of Public Affairs. He has founded the LBJ Business Policy Forum, which convenes business and policy leaders to address public policy issues shaping U.S. competitiveness.

Dilawar holds an MBA from the Wharton School and a BA in Computer Science and Economics from the University of Texas at Austin.