

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 7, 2011

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Chairmen McKeon and Levin and Ranking Members Smith and McCain:

As you craft a conference report for H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, we respectfully ask that you retain Senate-passed provisions reauthorizing the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. These provisions passed the Senate on a voice vote and carry bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress.

As you know, the SBIR program has increased our nation's access to innovative ideas, technologies, and capabilities through the programs' support for entrepreneurs and small businesses. This bipartisan program is often described as the most successful federal government R&D program. In its 30-year history, it has proven to be particularly critical to the Department of Defense, providing our military with a wide range of technologies that have improved aircraft launch safety, biological toxin detection, fuel tank protection, advanced threat targeting, and personnel protection, among many others. It has also helped to grow private sector companies which not only produce the equipment and technology that help keep our servicemen and women safe, but also employ tens of thousands of Americans in a variety of high-paying research and manufacturing jobs.

Yet several years' worth of short-term extensions have created significant uncertainty for both the federal government and for the small businesses that create jobs. Given the importance of the SBIR program to our Armed Forces, enactment of the reauthorization in this year's NDAA is appropriate. It also represents the best opportunity in several years to provide certainty for the Department and other federal agencies as they budget for the program.

Specifically, we support the Senate-passed call for a long-term reauthorization that maintains the program's original intent: fostering innovative and cutting-edge research at small businesses. The Senate amendment rightly codifies the compromise endorsed by the Biotechnology Industry

Organization, the Small Business Technology Coalition, the National Small Business Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the National Venture Capital Association, and universities and technology groups across the country to expand the participation of firms that are majority-owned by venture capital (VC) companies beyond current law without allowing such firms to crowd out true innovative small businesses.

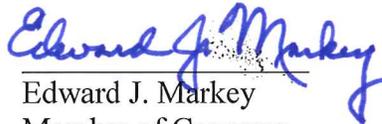
Likewise, the amendment preserves the current program's merit-based principles instead of enacting a new and arbitrary quota system. Under the Senate-passed provisions, if the Department of Defense determines that a specific SBIR proposal is most likely to provide the military with the quality technology necessary for protecting our troops, the Department retains its freedom to invest in that technology regardless of how many SBIR awards the developer has previously won. Similarly, the amendment retains Phase I of the award process, guaranteeing that concepts prove feasibility before receiving a major investment from the federal government.

As representatives of Congressional districts where SBIR spurs innovation, creates jobs and exemplifies the successful possibilities of targeted government investment, we cannot risk letting this crucial program lapse. We appreciate your past support for the SBIR program and respectfully request its inclusion in the conference report for H.R. 1540.

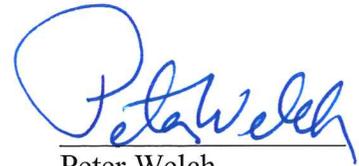
Sincerely,



Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress



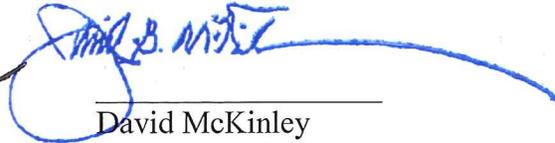
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono  
Member of Congress



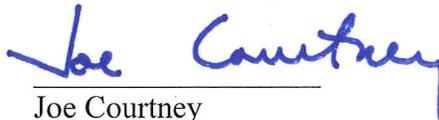
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



David McKinley  
Member of Congress



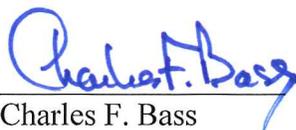
Donald Manzullo  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



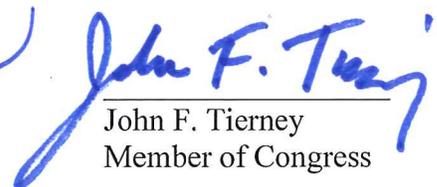
William Keating  
Member of Congress



Charles F. Bass  
Member of Congress



Lois Capps  
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress

  
Laura Richardson  
Member of Congress

  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Murphy  
Member of Congress

  
James P. McGovern  
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David N. Cicilline  
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Jackie Speier  
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Paul D. Tonko  
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Russ Carnahan  
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Jared Polis  
Member of Congress

  
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress

  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

  
Martin Heinrich  
Member of Congress

  
Bob Filner  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janice Hahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Janice Hahn  
Member of Congress