

January 15, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

We write to urge immediate reauthorization of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. These essential programs have delivered American technological leadership, supported economic growth, and strengthened our national security for more than four decades. Ongoing congressional discussions, such as those surrounding the bipartisan SBIR/STTR reauthorization compromise, underscore the strong, cross-sector consensus on the importance of these programs.

Since the introduction of the SBIR program by Congress in 1982, these awards have enabled America's most innovative small businesses to translate early-stage research into commercially viable technologies, with incredible return on investment (ROI). A comprehensive study of the Department of War, the largest SBIR/STTR-participating agency, found that approximately 16,500 Phase II awards generated a return on investment of roughly 22:1—meaning about **\$22 in total economic output for every federal dollar invested**. Similarly, a National Cancer Institute study found that approximately \$787 million in Phase II awards generated roughly **\$91 billion in economic impact**, created tens of thousands of jobs, and supported the commercialization of critical healthcare technologies.

Some of the most notable and impactful beneficiaries of the SBIR/STTR program include Qualcomm, SpaceX, and Illumina, who have each become global leaders in their respective fields and have delivered outsized returns in the form of job creation, regional economic development, and technologies vital to public health and national defense.

- **Qualcomm's** SBIR/STTR-supported foundational wireless communication technologies now underpin the global mobile economy and support millions of high-paying jobs across the United States.
- **SpaceX** leveraged early SBIR funding to advance launch and space systems technologies that have dramatically reduced the cost of access to space, strengthened United States leadership in the commercial space sector, and created a rapidly growing domestic aerospace workforce.
- **Illumina's** SBIR-supported innovations helped drive advances in genomic sequencing technologies that have transformed biomedical research, improved healthcare outcomes, and fueled a robust American life sciences industry.

In addition to this significant impact on the economy with overwhelming ROI and job creation, the SBIR/STTR program has played a vital role in ensuring America remains the global leader in innovation. However, we are slipping, and foreign competitors—most notably China—are

making sustained, strategic investments in research and development (R&D) to gain dominance in critical and emerging technologies. China's R&D investment has been **growing faster** than the United States, with annual increases of approximately **8–9 percent**. Meanwhile, United States federal R&D spending as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) has declined sharply—from a historic high of 1.86 percent in 1964 to approximately 0.62 percent in 2023. This divergence is steadily eroding the foundation of our long-term global competitiveness.

SBIR/STTR funding represents one of the most efficient, accountable, and high-impact mechanisms available to ensure that the United States continues to lead the world in technological advancement. Businesses in all 50 states have benefitted from SBIR/STTR funding. In many cases, SBIR/STTR awards provide the first—and sometimes only—source of capital that enables high-risk, high-reward ideas to mature into commercially viable and mission-critical technologies. The SBIR/STTR programs are uniquely effective because they leverage the ingenuity, speed, and risk-taking capacity of small businesses. Failure to reauthorize SBIR/STTR is already disrupting thousands of small businesses, undermining federal agencies' innovation pipelines, and weakening the broader U.S. economy.

At stake is not merely the future of individual companies, but America's ability to lead in science, technology, and innovation. Allowing SBIR/STTR to remain lapsed would send precisely the wrong signal to innovators, investors, and international competitors alike.

We respectfully urge congressional leadership to prioritize the timely reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR programs. Doing so will reaffirm bipartisan commitment to small businesses, strengthen America's innovation base, and help ensure that the United States—not China—sets the pace for technological leadership in the decades ahead.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. For further information or to discuss this issue in more detail, please contact Liz Powell, Esq., MPH at lpowell@G2Gconsulting.com or Dr. Eva Garland at eva@evagarland.com.

Warm regards,

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