

The SBIR Program is Threatened -
A Legislative Action Plan for SBIR Reauthorization

Majority venture capital funded companies are pushing to remove current size limits on SBIR companies and SBIR contract awards. A House initiative, in the form of a “Dear Colleague” letter, spearheaded by Representatives Markey, Tsongas, Welch and Hodes is underway to urge Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, who heads the House Small Business Committee, to move forward with a reauthorization that maintains the SBIR program under its current statutes.

A concerted effort is needed from each of you to assist with this effort by contacting your House Representative as soon as possible. This action must be completed within the next week if possible, and by Friday, April 10th at the latest.

1. Lobby your House Representative:
 - a. Contact your Representative. Find your Representative’s telephone number using the link shown here: (<http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>) and ask to speak to the small business legislative aide (LA).
 - b. Ask the aide if he/she is aware of the current issues with the SBIR program and the current house initiative. If not, explain briefly what it is.
 - c. Tell the aide about your concern, briefly about your business and the importance of SBIR (you can direct them to http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbir/sbirstir/sbir_sbir_description.html).
 - d. Then ask him/her to contact Markey or Tsongas’s staffer to inform them that your Representative would like to sign the letter. These staffers are:
 - i. Rep. Markey: Mitchell_Robinson@mail.house.gov
 - ii. Rep. Tsongas: Kate_Lynch@mail.house.govTell the aide that you will follow up with them in the next few days and get their email and direct phone information.
 - e. Follow up with an email to the aide that provides a copy of both of the Markey/Tsongas/Welch/Hodes letters for their convenience in talking with their Representative (the “Dear Colleague” Letter and the Letter to Chairwoman Velazquez).
 - f. Call back in 36-48 hours to see whether or not he/she has been successful in convincing the Congressman/woman to sign onto the letter.
 - g. If they don’t have a definitive answer call back in another 24-36 hours until you receive a “yes” or “no” answer.

What Else Can I do?

Once you’ve spoken to your Representative, you can take further action by contacting other SBIR companies in the Congressman/woman’s district. Ask them to call the LA and express their concerns about the proposed changes to the SBIR program. For names of other SBIR companies in your district contact Alec Orban of Small Business

Technology Council at alec@sbtc.org. Call these companies, ask for the CEO, and urge him/her to take Action 1 above. There are over 7,000 active SBIR companies and fewer than one thousand are active in the reauthorization fight!

For more information on the “Dear Colleague” Letter and the Letter to Velazquez, go to www.sbtc.org or www.zyn.com/sbir/

Don't feel comfortable and need help? Contact us and we will connect you with a mentor who has done this before to help you through the process. Call or email Alec Orban at alec@sbtc.org, 202-662-9700 x 337.