



Opening Statement of Chairman Graves
Committee on Small Business
Hearing: “Oversight of the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Programs- Part II”
July 23, 2014

Good afternoon. I thank you all for being here.

Today, we are holding the second of two oversight hearings this year to examine the changes made in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 to both the Small Business Innovation Research, or SBIR, and Small Business Technology Transfer, or STTR, Programs. Our first hearing focused on private sector impressions of those changes. Today, we will focus on what the agencies have been doing to implement the modifications we made in 2012 to these programs.

Innovation is the engine that drives our economy. Technological breakthroughs and the entrepreneurship it spurs build our economy by finding state-of-the-art solutions to difficult problems and marketing those new products. This correlation is particularly important in the small business arena. Small businesses tend to be more nimble, responding to market changes more rapidly than their bigger counterparts, and they drive the innovation sector and make us more agile in the global economy.

It is that recognition of the ingenuity of small firms that led Congress to establish the SBIR program in 1982. It is also that recognition that has led to its subsequent reauthorizations, the last of which was signed into law thirty-one months ago.

This program, which sets aside a portion of federal research and development dollars for small businesses, is critical for both the small firms that use the grants and the federal agencies that seek innovative solutions to the problems they encounter. Whether it is a new software system for tracking contract payments, a new medical device to help with Parkinson’s treatment, or a new piece of technology that helps save lives on the battlefield, the SBIR program has consistently delivered results across all agencies.

The primary goals of the most recent and bipartisan legislation were to increase commercialization of SBIR funded research, to promote greater participation from a wider array of small businesses, and to increase the end use of the technology developed through the SBIR program by federal agencies.

Today, we have some of the folks most responsible for implementing the changes we wrote into law. I am eager to hear from them on their progress and to hear their impressions of the health of their SBIR and STTR programs.

Again, thank you all for being here and I yield to Ms. Velazquez for her opening statement.