

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVES JOHNSON AND WILSON CREATING JOBS THROUGH SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION ACT OF 2011

We are pleased to support H.R. 1425, the *Creating Jobs Through Small Business Innovation Act of 2011*. Small businesses are key players in fueling technological innovation and creating jobs in the United States. We can help to ensure a vibrant small business community in this country by enacting a comprehensive reauthorization of the SBIR and STTR programs.

However, we are very troubled that the legislation does not include a formal outreach provision and extremely disappointed that our efforts to address this omission were blocked. We believe that innovation can come from anywhere and that all small businesses are capable of developing innovative new technologies. Our chances of getting game-changing innovation are significantly increased if the SBIR applicant pool is larger and more diverse. For this reason, a formal outreach program focused on bringing additional qualified small businesses into the SBIR program is appropriate. Such a program should target small businesses owned by veterans and small businesses located in rural areas and areas suffering from high unemployment, as well as small businesses owned by women and minorities.

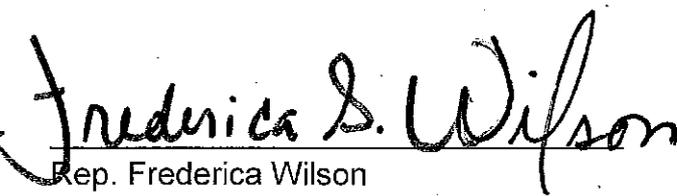
One of the four stated congressional objectives of the SBIR program is to encourage greater participation by woman- and minority-owned small businesses. Unfortunately, in its 2008 evaluation of the SBIR program, the National Research Council found that the program was not meeting this objective. Despite this, Democratic attempts at both the subcommittee and Full Committee markups to provide agencies with a formal mechanism for carrying out outreach and technical assistance activities and to supply them with the required resources to do so were blocked.

Majority objections to an outreach program were initially linked to cost. However, a cost-neutral proposal was also rejected over unfounded concerns that it created a mandate. A plain reading of the cost-neutral proposal demonstrates that it did not require all SBIR agencies to fund outreach and technical assistance activities. Only the agencies that chose to participate in the pilot program under Section 310 would have been required to set aside a small percentage of funding for targeted outreach activities. Moreover, a reasonable waiver clause was included for cases where an exemption from the requirement would be necessary and appropriate. That being said, making any initiative entirely elective – as proposed by some of our Majority colleagues at the markup - will simply not address the participation challenges facing the SBIR program and is not acceptable.

We will have shirked our responsibilities to the SBIR program and previous congressional intent if we continue to ignore this issue and fail to include a meaningful provision in the bill to ensure that outreach to underrepresented small businesses is occurring. It is our sincere hope that this issue will be adequately addressed as this legislation moves forward.



Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member



Rep. Frederica Wilson