

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Markup of H.R. 2763, the “*Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Improvements Act of 2017*”
June 22, 2017

Thank you Chairman Smith for holding this markup of H.R. 2763, *the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Improvements Act of 2017*. H.R. 2763 was introduced and previously marked up by our colleagues on the Small Business Committee. This morning, Members of the Science Committee have an opportunity to debate and amend this important legislation.

The Small Business Innovation Research Program, or SBIR, was created by Congress in 1982. Since then, it has grown in size from \$45 million to over \$2.2 billion, and expanded to include the Small Business Technology Transfer, or STTR, Program. The mission of the SBIR program is four-fold: to stimulate technological innovation, to use small businesses to help meet federal research and development needs, to increase private sector commercialization of the results of federally funded research, and to foster the participation of women and minority owned firms in technological innovation.

I believe the evidence shows SBIR to be an extremely valuable program that we must continue to support and strengthen. However, I continue to believe we must consider SBIR in the context of our broader Federal R&D investments.

In December 2016, Congress provided certainty for the SBIR program for the next 5 years by extending its authorization through Fiscal Year 2022 at the current allocation level. I was pleased we were able to accomplish that small but important task. As grant proposal success rates at NSF and NIH sink to historical lows for some programs, we should be very wary of any actions that would further destabilize the basic research enterprise that serves as the foundation for our nation’s innovation and economic growth. I would be very happy to see SBIR and STTR grow in addition to funding for Federal R&D overall, and I am eager to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make that happen. I will also note that the SBIR Program has been evaluated in two rounds of reports by The National Academies. Overall, the Academies have found that agencies are meeting the first three objectives of the program, but falling short on the fourth objective of expanding participation of women and minorities. We must continue to push agencies on this objective. Our nation’s capacity to innovate will deteriorate rapidly if we keep excluding a large and growing percentage of our population from technological innovation and entrepreneurship.

This morning, Members on both sides are preparing to offer substantive amendments to the Small Business Committee’s introduced bill. We will then have to reconcile any differences with the Small Business Committee’s amendments. While there will be policy issues on which we have disagreements, H.R. 2763 is a good bill, and I am pleased to be able to work closely with the Chairman and my other Republican colleagues to advance it. I believe we can get to an agreement with the Small Business Committee and bring this bill to the House Floor.

Thank you again, Chairman Smith, for holding this markup and for making this a bipartisan and transparent process. I hope we can do more of this in future months.

I yield back.