Dear Minority Leader McConnell,

As a small business owner in Kentucky, I am writing to urge you to include an extension of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs into the upcoming omnibus government funding bill.

The SBIR/STTR programs are currently set to expire on September 30, 2022. While we support a full reauthorization through regular order, the calendar realities in Congress this year and lack of legislative vehicles available prior to the termination date mean that it is a very real possibility that these programs could expire before a full reauthorization can be passed.

That would be a crushing blow to American innovation, and would undermine small business job creation in Kentucky during our nation’s economic recovery. The SBIR/STTR programs are a vital resource for early-stage R&D, providing an average over $20 million a year in funding to Kentucky high-tech small businesses, generating hundreds of high-tech jobs in Kentucky SBIR and STTR are an essential part of America’s innovative high-tech ecosystem, and even the threat of a short-term disruption of these programs could have a severe effect on R&D-focused small businesses. Kentucky’s small businesses need certainty, stability, and predictability to budget and plan for the future—especially as the nation works to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this in mind, we respectfully request that you include an extension of the SBIR/STTR programs, including related pilot authorities, in the upcoming government funding bill. This extension will give Congress the time it needs to develop and pass a comprehensive bipartisan reauthorization bill for SBIR and STTR, one that includes needed changes and improvements. It will also give both small businesses and federal agencies the certainty that these vital programs will not expire or be disrupted.