

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 27, 2012

The Honorable Francis S. Collins
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Collins:

We write to express strong support for the NIH proof-of-concept pilot program authorized by the SBIR-STTR reauthorization included in the defense authorization bill passed in December, 2011.


The proof-of-concept program would complement the existing SBIR/STTR program at NIH by awarding grants of up to \$1 million to universities to support researchers exploring the potential commercialization and licensing of their discoveries. These investments could spur innovation that creates new products and new American jobs at a time when the economy sorely needs them.

This program was modeled after a similar effort at the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation. During testimony before the Science, Space, and Technology Committee last year, a witness from the University of Virginia described how his institution has addressed technology transfer challenges with a proof-of-concept program. According to an independent audit of that program, for every dollar spent by the university, five dollars were invested by the private sector. For the top ten percent of projects in the technology transfer portfolio, the return on investment was an astounding 42 to 1. Other proof-of-concept programs have met with similar success.

The proof-of-concept program could play a critical role across the nation in turning the strength of America's research universities into job-creating innovation. This program enjoys the strong support of the Association of American Universities and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. We ask that the NIH take advantage of this opportunity and use the authority granted by Congress to set up a pilot program as soon as practicable.

Sincerely,


Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

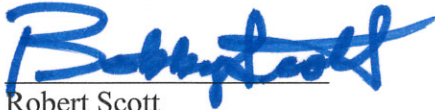

James Moran
Member of Congress



Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



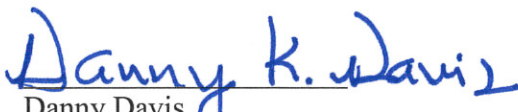
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Robert Scott
Member of Congress



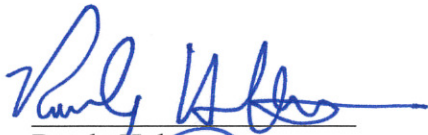
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



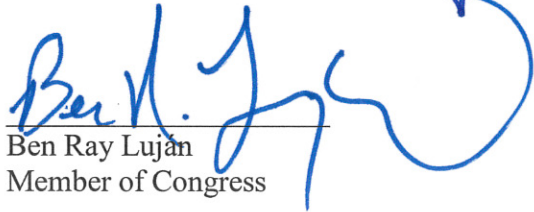
Danny Davis
Member of Congress



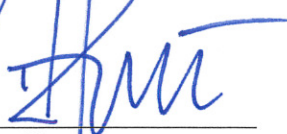
Gerald Connolly
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress



Robert Hurt
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