

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2007

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E880
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

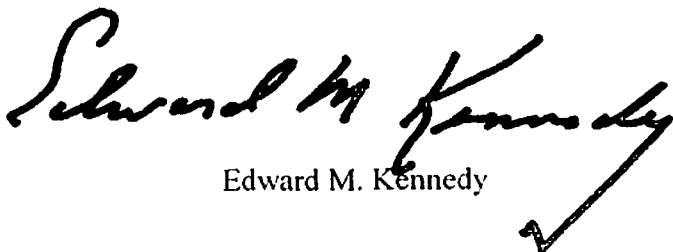
We are writing to respectfully urge the Department of Defense to submit a reprogramming request to transfer back \$260 million in funding to the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programs of the Air Force and Army.

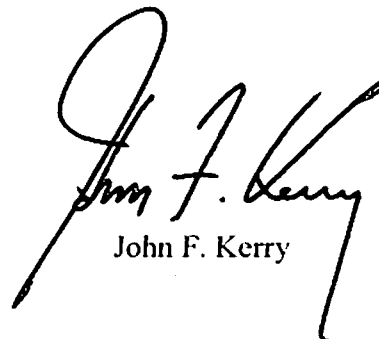
These funds were designated for the SBIR program and were temporarily reprogrammed within the Department of Defense earlier this year. It is our understanding that the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans Care, Katrina Recovery and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 provides the money that will allow the funds previously reallocated from the SBIR program to be replenished.

It is imperative that these funds be restored to the SBIR program as soon as possible and that the Air Force and Army disburse awards to the small businesses that need those funds to resume important research and development projects for the government. As the government's only program of its kind, SBIR plays a critical role in the development of military weaponry and equipment that protect our national security interests at home and abroad. Cybernet Systems of Ann Arbor, Michigan, is just one example of SBIR research helping our military. That company developed a technology to sort bullets that allows one soldier to do the work that used to be done by 40. The machine uses lasers and computer cameras to sort and inspect bullets at a much finer level of detail than the human can manage. This not only frees up our soldiers for other important missions, but it also saves a tremendous amount of money that would otherwise be spent on wasted, lost, and damaged ammunition.

The prompt reprogramming of \$260 million in Army and Air Force SBIR funds will allow thousands of small businesses to resume the development of similar important and cost-effective technologies. Please provide us with a copy of the reprogramming request as soon as it is available, as well as any documentation that demonstrates action by the Department to return SBIR activities to normal. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Edward M. Kennedy


John F. Kerry

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
SBIR Reprogramming
June 11, 2007
Page 2

Cc: The Honorable Michael W. Wynne
Secretary
U.S. Air Force

The Honorable Preston M. Geren, III
Secretary (Acting)
U.S. Army