

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are in a period of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

SMALL BUSINESS/SBIR

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I applaud the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee for their efforts in putting together a thoughtful, balanced reauthorization of the Small Business Innovations Research—SBIR—and Small Business Technology Transfer—STTR—programs.

I know the committee is in negotiations with the House trying to reach a good reconciliation with the right parameters. I hope they do, so that we have these programs in place for years to come instead of another short-term extension.

SBIR was set up in 1982 and requires 11 Federal departments and agencies like the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation to set aside 2.5 percent of their research and development budgets for small businesses, which is over \$2 billion per year. STTR sets aside another 0.3 percent of R&D for small businesses to work in partnership with university and institutional researchers. Both programs have been highly successful, helping propel small business growth, and develop and commercialize the innovations that are the backbone of our economy.

I wanted to share a few facts about small business for the record.

According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses annually create between 60 and 80 percent of the net new jobs in America.

Small businesses produce on average 13 to 14 times more patents per employee than large patenting firms.

Small business employs about 38 percent of the scientists and engineers in America, up from only 6 percent in 1978.

Despite all this growth and stellar track record, small business receives only about 4 percent of Federal extramural research dollars. That needs to change. Small business has proven they can do Federal R&D as well as or better than large business, and they deserve more space at the table.

Small business is going to be the engine that pulls the country out of this recession, like it has so many times in the past. Looking beyond the recession, small business will again develop the innovative technologies in which America consistently leads the world. The Senate bill wisely supports and extends our support for small business's role in growing a vibrant national economy.

In my own State of North Dakota, SBIR has helped fund a number of in-

novations, and I wanted to mention a few of them.

The Technology Applications Group of Grand Forks, located in the Red River Valley Research Corridor, invented the Tagnite coating system through Army and Navy SBIR funds. The technology allows the military to coat magnesium alloys for parts, ships, helicopters and airplanes in a way that is much less toxic than old processes, cuts down on corrosion, and saves on maintenance.

Agasco of Grand Forks received an SBIR grant that led to development of the SCOIL and SUN-IT II products that enhance crop herbicide effectiveness. Agasco turned their SBIR grants into two products with a great deal of commercial impact.

Dakota Technologies of Fargo has received multiple SBIR grants, including two that led to development of BEAM, or ballast exchange assurance meter, which measures ballast water in ships to make sure they don't contain harmful species or contaminants. BEAM is currently in a pilot program with the Coast Guard.

Back in 2002, I secured funding to develop telepharmacy technology to connect pharmacists directly with patients and pharmacy technicians regardless of their location. Technologies like this have been a boon to rural communities because they allow them to compete on a level playing field with urban areas.

The USDA just awarded Telepharmacy Concepts of Dickinson, ND, with an \$80,000 Phase I SBIR award that will allow them to research whether telepharmacy technology could be used for medication therapy management, which is a way to provide patient education, increase medication compliance and improve health care outcomes.

Praxis Strategy Group of Grand Forks has received SBIR awards nine times, including grants from the USDA to develop strategic processes like the High Performance Community Initiative and the Enterprise Homesteading Program that help communities, especially small communities, attract entrepreneurs, develop dynamic economies, and market themselves.

While I am happy with the Senate reauthorization, I am concerned about some of the provisions in the House version we are trying to reconcile it with.

First, the House bill opens participation in SBIR to companies that are majority-owned by venture capital firms. I have nothing against venture capital companies, but the small businesses that they own have already shown they can successfully attract capital in the private market.

SBIR was intended to help small businesses without the connections available to do that. I think the House bill is trying to fix something that isn't broken.

Second, given the long-term success of SBIR and STTR, I think it only makes sense to increase the share of

agency funds set aside for small business as the Senate's bill gradually does.

American business has changed dramatically since SBIR was created. Since 1978, the share of scientists and engineers working for small businesses has, as I said, increased from 6 to 38 percent. Funding for SBIR and STTR needs to increase to reflect that reality. I am concerned that the House bill keeps their allocations where they have been for 27 years, despite the successful track record of the programs. Given the figures I have quoted previously, increasing the set-aside from 2.5 to 3.5 percent is the very least we should do.

Small business is the core of our country's economy, and we have here a program that has a strong track record of encouraging growth and innovation in that area. I urge the program's reauthorization with the principles of Senate bill S. 1233.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VETERANS HOMELESSNESS ACT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the introduction of S. 1547—the Zero Tolerance for Veterans Homelessness Act. I am very proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation and to join my good friend, Senator JACK REED, along with Senators TIM JOHNSON and PATTY MURRAY, on addressing the tragedy of homelessness among our Nation's veterans. My three colleagues have been steadfast in their resolve to address the needs of veterans, including the tragedy of homelessness, and I commend them.

Senator REED has been a strong and committed leader on affordable housing and homeless issues and his leadership played a strong role in the recent enactment of the historic Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act or HEARTH Act. I am honored to join him again.

Like the HEARTH Act, the Zero Tolerance for Veterans Homelessness Act builds on our work over the past several years by focusing on the importance of permanent supportive housing. Further, it takes important steps to break down the barriers between the Departments of Veterans Affairs, VA, and Housing and Urban Development, HUD, to ensure that veterans receive the quality services and housing they deserve and need.

The most notable element of the legislation is the authorization of HUD-VA Supportive Housing or HUD-VASH rental-assistance vouchers. Working with Senator PATTY MURRAY, new HUD-VASH vouchers have been funded over the past 2 years. While other HUD homeless-assistance programs serve veterans, HUD-VASH is the only permanent housing program that is specifically targeted to veterans and tied to veteran-specific supportive services from the VA.

We have been fortunate to fund 10,000 new vouchers each year but with over