

# Congressman Brian Baird

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, Washington State

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### **Rep. Baird Supports Small Business Innovators**

Washington, DC – Congressman Brian Baird today joined medical health care advocates and biotechnology leaders from around the country to urge passage of legislation that would help small business innovators. Save Biotechnology Innovative Research Act, which Congressman Baird co-sponsored, would fix a regulatory glitch that is currently stifling the important research and development being conducted by venture capital-backed small businesses.

**“The SBIR program helps create new jobs and develop new industries by providing business innovators with seed money,”** said Congressman Baird. **“This glitch is inhibiting the growth of small businesses that provide life-saving and life-enhancing products simply because these companies receive financial support from private investors. Government should support technological advancement and economic growth, not inhibit it.”**

In 2001, the Small Business Administration (SBA) ruled that companies receiving more than 51 percent of their financial backing from venture capitalists were excluded from the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, an SBA-managed federal grant program. Congressman Baird supports changing that rule because venture capital-backed small businesses conduct an array of innovative, life-saving research and development programs, and many of these innovative small businesses could not support their costly research without some venture capital funding. Congressman Baird also believes the 2001 SBIR ruling conflicts with the original intent of the law; SBIR was established in 1982 to encourage small businesses to explore their technological and commercial potential, and to enable them to compete with larger businesses.

**“Congressman Baird’s efforts on behalf of the millions of individuals facing devastating and chronic diseases are very much appreciated by the biotech companies anxious to continue their research as well as the patients waiting for new therapies,”** said Scott Whitaker, Chief Operating Officer of the Biotechnology Industry Organization. **“This legislation, H.R. 2943 and S.1263, is needed to eliminate regulatory interpretation that is stifling promising research that could improve the health and lives of people living with many diseases such as HIV, lupus, diabetes, leukemia, Alzheimer’s and West Nile virus.”**

Congressman Baird became involved in SBIR reform after talking with nLight, a venture capital-backed small business innovator in his congressional district that was deemed ineligible for SBIR grant funds. Vancouver-based nLight manufactures high-power semiconductor lasers that have medical and defense applications.

The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) represents more than 1,100 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations in all 50 states.

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