

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 539

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## AN ACT

To require the Director of the National Science Foundation to develop an I-Corps course to support commercialization-ready innovation companies, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Innovators to Entre-  
3 preneurs Act of 2019”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The National Science Foundation Innova-  
7 tion Corps Program (hereinafter referred to as “I-  
8 Corps”), created administratively by the Foundation  
9 in 2011 and statutorily authorized in the American  
10 Innovation and Competitiveness Act, has succeeded  
11 in increasing the commercialization of Government-  
12 funded research.

13 (2) I-Corps provides valuable entrepreneurial  
14 education to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows,  
15 and other researchers, providing formal training for  
16 scientists and engineers to pursue careers in busi-  
17 ness, an increasingly common path for advanced de-  
18 gree holders.

19 (3) The I-Corps Teams program is successful in  
20 part due to its focus on providing the specific types  
21 of education and mentoring entrepreneurs need  
22 based on the early stage of their companies, however  
23 the program does not provide similar support to  
24 them at later stages.

25 (4) The success of I-Corps in the very early  
26 stages of the innovation continuum should be ex-

1       panded upon by offering additional entrepreneurship  
2       training to small businesses as they advance toward  
3       commercialization.

4           (5) The excellent training made available to  
5       grantees of participating agencies through the I-  
6       Corps Program should be made available to all Fed-  
7       eral grantees as well as other businesses willing to  
8       pay the cost of attending such training.

9           (6) The success of the I-Corps Program at pro-  
10      moting entrepreneurship within research institutions  
11      and encouraging research commercialization has  
12      been due in part to the National Science Founda-  
13      tion's efforts to date on building a national network  
14      of science entrepreneurs, including convening stake-  
15      holders, promoting national I-Corps courses, cata-  
16      loguing best practices and encourage sharing be-  
17      tween sites and institutions, and developing a men-  
18      tor network.

19          (7) As the I-Corps Program continues to grow  
20      and expand, the National Science Foundation should  
21      maintain its focus on networking and information  
22      sharing to ensure that innovators across the country  
23      can learn from their peers and remain competitive.

1 **SEC. 3. EXPANDED PARTICIPATION IN I-CORPS.**

2 Section 601(c)(2) of the American Innovation and  
3 Competitiveness Act (42 U.S.C. 1862s–8(e)(2)) is amend-  
4 ed by adding at the end the following:

5 “(C) **ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS.**—

6 “(i) **ELIGIBILITY.**—The Director, in  
7 consultation with relevant stakeholders, as  
8 determined by the Director, which may in-  
9 clude Federal agencies, I-Corps regional  
10 nodes, universities, and public and private  
11 entities engaged in technology transfer or  
12 commercialization of technologies, shall  
13 provide an option for participation in an I-  
14 Corps Teams course by—

15 “(I) Small Business Innovation  
16 Research Program grantees; and

17 “(II) other entities, as deter-  
18 mined appropriate by the Director.

19 “(ii) **COST OF PARTICIPATION.**—The  
20 cost of participation by a Small Business  
21 Innovation Research Program grantee in  
22 such course may be provided—

23 “(I) through I-Corps Teams  
24 grants;

25 “(II) through funds awarded to  
26 grantees under the Small Business In-

1                   novation Research Program or the  
2                   Small Business Technology Transfer  
3                   Program;

4                   “(III) by the grantor Federal  
5                   agency of the grantee using funds set  
6                   aside for the Small Business Innova-  
7                   tion Research Program under section  
8                   9(f)(1) of the Small Business Act (15  
9                   U.S.C. 638(f)(1));

10                  “(IV) by the grantor Federal  
11                  agency of the grantee using funds set  
12                  aside for the Small Business Tech-  
13                  nology Transfer Program under sec-  
14                  tion 9(n)(1) of the Small Business  
15                  Act (15 U.S.C. 638(n)(1)); or

16                  “(V) by the participating  
17                  teams.”.

18 **SEC. 4. I-CORPS COURSE FOR COMMERCIALIZATION-READY**

19 **PARTICIPANTS.**

20                  (a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the I-Corps pro-  
21                  gram described in section 601(c) of the American Innova-  
22                  tion and Competitiveness Act (42 U.S.C. 1862s–8(c)), the  
23                  Director shall develop an I-Corps course offered by I-  
24                  Corps regional nodes to support commercialization-ready  
25                  participants. Such course shall include skills such as at-

1 tracting investors, scaling up a company, and building a  
2 brand.

3 (b) ENGAGEMENT WITH RELEVANT STAKE-  
4 HOLDERS.—In developing the course under subsection (a),  
5 the Director may consult with the heads of such Federal  
6 agencies, universities, and public and private entities as  
7 the Director determines to be appropriate.

8 (c) ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS.—The course developed  
9 under subsection (a) shall—

10 (1) support participants that have completed an  
11 I-Corps Teams course;

12 (2) support participants that have made the de-  
13 cision to take an innovation to market.

14 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

15 Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment  
16 of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States  
17 shall submit to Congress a report containing an evaluation  
18 of the I-Corps program described in section 601(c) of the  
19 American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (42 U.S.C.  
20 1862s–8(c)). Such evaluation shall include an assessment  
21 of the effects of I-Corps on—

22 (1) the commercialization of Federally funded  
23 research and development;

24 (2) the higher education system; and

1           (3) regional economies and the national econ-  
2           omy.

3 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

4           (a) IN GENERAL.—Out of amounts otherwise author-  
5 ized for the National Science Foundation, there is author-  
6 ized to be appropriated a total of \$5,000,000 for fiscal  
7 years 2020 and 2021 to carry out the activities described  
8 in section 4 and the amendment made by section 3.

9           (b) LIMITATION.—No additional funds are authorized  
10 to be appropriated to carry out this Act and the amend-  
11 ments made by this Act, and this Act and such amend-  
12 ments shall be carried out using amounts otherwise avail-  
13 able for such purpose.

Passed the House of Representatives February 25,  
2019.

Attest:

*Clerk.*

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1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

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