

THE COALITION FOR 21ST CENTURY PATENT REFORM

Protecting Innovation to Enhance American Competitiveness

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May 6, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7010

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

For more than two centuries America's economic promise has been secured through a reliable and efficient patent system. Over the last fifteen years, however, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has lacked sufficient funding, technical resources, and the capability to process patent applications in a timely and efficient manner and to grant reliable patents. As a result, patents now face a gauntlet of legal challenges.

As you know, Chairman Leahy and Senator Sessions announced a bipartisan agreement on a Managers' Amendment to S. 515 that reforms our patent system and provides the USPTO with the resources necessary to begin reducing its current backlog of more than 700,000 patent applications and improving the quality of the patents it grants. This compromise agreement, the result of diligent consensus building between the USPTO and its constituents - industry groups, universities, and independent entrepreneurs - will provide real improvements to our patent system.

Attached to this letter, you will find a summary of the key provisions of this important legislation, and an analysis of how patents help the economy and create jobs. Patent law is complicated, with unique terminology and complex procedures, but its implementation directly affects research, investment, hiring, and production decisions. In short, this bill will in some way touch every person in the country.

Reforming our nation's patent system and providing the USPTO with the funds needed to do its job promptly and properly will stimulate our economy. It will create new jobs in research laboratories that will lead to innovative new products, jobs in large and small companies to

manufacture these products, and jobs in the sale and distribution of these products worldwide for the benefit of consumers. An economy cannot properly function if its new ideas are stuck in bureaucratic and legal limbo. This bill is an economic necessity.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. It is our hope that this important legislation be considered by the Senate as soon as possible. We look forward to continuing our work with you and your staffs as this legislation moves to the Senate floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Griswold". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "G".

Gary Griswold
Chairman, Coalition for 21st Century Patent Reform