

Senate Passes Historic America Invents Act

Bill Unleashes Innovation, Creates Jobs

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WASHINGTON (Tuesday, March 8, 2011) – The Senate Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to approve legislation to make the first reforms to the nation’s patent system in nearly six decades. The America Invents Act is the product of nearly six years of debate in Congress. The bill is sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), and is cosponsored by a dozen other Senators.

“The America Invents Act will promote American innovation, create American jobs and grow America’s economy, all without adding to the deficit,” said Leahy. “It is a jobs bill that won’t spend a penny of taxpayer dollars. It is commonsense legislation that will help preserve America’s position as the global leader in invention and innovation. I hope that the House will look favorably on our work and adopt this measure so that it can be sent it to the President without delay and its improvements can take effect in order to encourage American innovation and promote American invention.”

“To maintain our nation’s technological and entrepreneurial edge in the increasingly competitive global marketplace, it is vitally important that we have an efficient and streamlined patent system,” Hatch said. “This bill, which enjoys widespread support from lawmakers and the business community, will help expedite the patent process and further unleash the innovation and ingenuity that have kept America at the forefront of the world economy.”

“An effective, efficient patent system can help create jobs and prosperity for starts-ups on Main Street and businesses across the country,” Grassley said. “The bipartisan legislation that the Senate just passed to bring the U.S. patent system into the 21st Century helps keep America’s researchers, entrepreneurs, engineers and inventors in the driver’s seat in our global economy.” “Innovation has always been a catalyzing force in Minnesota and across the country,” Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) said. “But our outdated patent system is stifling innovation. This legislation will provide entrepreneurs and businesses the tools they need to continue to focus on innovation. It’s time to modernize our patent system, cut red tape, and make it easier for our businesses to compete in the global economy.”

The America Invents Act will improve patent quality and help to reduce patent application backlogs at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). It will transition the U.S. patent system to a first-inventor-to-file system, and ensure that the USPTO has the funds necessary to process the backlog of more than 700,000 pending patent applications. Importantly, the reforms included in the legislation will not cost any taxpayer dollars.

The legislation incorporates the core provisions included in the original Patent Reform Act, first introduced in the House of Representatives in 2005 by Congressmen Lamar Smith of Texas and Howard Berman of California. The America Invents Act of 2011 is supported by the Obama administration, and a cross-section of industries and stakeholders.