



March 24, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

Thank you for your support for the bipartisan Inventor Diversity for Economic Advancement (IDEA) Act (S. 632). The IDEA Act is a critical step toward ensuring that our nation's patent system is open and equally accessible to all of America's inventors. By allowing the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to collect demographic data on a voluntary basis from inventors, we will expand our understanding of the challenges facing women, people of color, veterans, and others as they navigate the invention process. The Innovation Alliance urges the Committee to act quickly to pass the IDEA Act.

The Innovation Alliance represents innovators, patent owners, and stakeholders from a diverse range of industries that believe in the critical importance of maintaining a strong patent system that supports innovative enterprises of all sizes. Innovation Alliance members can be found in large and small communities across the country, helping to fuel the innovation pipeline and drive the 21st century economy. We support policies that will encourage patenting among all inventors and open up the innovation ecosystem to everyone.

Encouraging further innovation from diverse inventors will promote economic growth. The USPTO estimates that IP-intensive industries are responsible for generating over \$8 trillion, more than one-third of U.S. GDP. And research has shown that we could add an additional \$1 trillion to our annual GDP by including more women and African Americans in the early stages of the innovation process.

Although these numbers shed some light on the patent diversity gap, we still have an incomplete picture because the USPTO does not have the authority to collect demographic information from inventors applying for patents. The IDEA Act would help correct this by directing the USPTO to collect demographic data—such as gender, race, or veteran status—on inventors from patent applications on a voluntary basis and make this information available to the public. This will greatly aid public and private efforts to further understand the patent diversity gap and create policies that will support further innovation from women, people of color, and other diverse

individuals. The USPTO would keep demographic information separate from the patent application to help prevent implicit bias in the patent examination process.

The IDEA Act will provide us with the data we need to break down barriers to patenting in underrepresented communities and allow us to maintain a strong and inclusive patent system. By unlocking the full potential of America's brightest minds, we will be better able to meet the challenges of tomorrow and preserve U.S. technology leadership on the global stage.

The Innovation Alliance appreciates your consideration of the IDEA Act.

Sincerely,

Brian Pomper  
Executive Director  
Innovation Alliance

cc: Senator Mazie Hirono  
Senator Thom Tillis  
Senator Chris Coons  
Senator Patrick Leahy  
Senator Richard Blumenthal