

Remarks at Opening of First U.S. Patent and Trademark Satellite Office, Detroit, Michigan

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Acting Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank

Remarks at Opening of First U.S. Patent and Trademark Satellite Office, Detroit, Michigan

Thank you, Senators Stabenow and Levin, Congressmen Conyers, Clarke, Dingell, Peters, and Mayor Bing.

Let's give a round of applause to Dave Kappos and everyone at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for their hard work to make this day possible.

Back in 1790, when our patent system was created by Congress, President Washington himself had to sign each patent.

Thankfully, it wasn't a big job. That year, there were just three.

Fast forward to today. For each of the past two years, we have issued over 200,000 patents—more than ever before.

Last fall, President Obama made history by signing the America Invents Act, which modernizes our patent system to better meet the needs of inventors, entrepreneurs, and businesses of all sizes.

As part of that law, last week, we announced new offices in the pipeline for Silicon Valley, Denver, and Dallas; and today, we're celebrating the opening of the office that will lead the way and set the standard—Detroit's Elijah J. McCoy Office.

Already, with the help of businesses in places like Michigan, the U.S. has seen 28 straight months of private sector job growth—4.4 million jobs.

But we still have much work to do to dig our way out of the deepest recession since the Great Depression.

President Obama has been a leader as we've worked our way through this crisis.

For example, because of his support, America's auto industry is going strong and has created 200,000 jobs over the past two and one-half years.

And last week, the administration stood up once again for our automakers. Our U.S. Trade Representative challenged China's unfair duties on \$3 billion in exports of American-made cars. That's important because when American businesses can compete on a level playing field, they win.

And now, today, with this new office, we're making another critical investment in the future of Detroit, the state of Michigan, and the U.S. as a whole.

With the help of the McCoy office, we're creating a stronger, more efficient patent system. That's important because patents are the fuel for innovation.

Patents protect the intellectual property of Americans who have game-changing ideas. Patents help put those ideas to work in our economy. And patents help us out-compete the rest of the world.

We've already made great progress in improving our patent system. Even though patent filings grew five percent last year, we were able to actually reduce the patent backlog by 10 percent.

The McCoy office will help us continue to expand our patent system's capacity and productivity.

To run the office, we're hiring 120 new patent examiners, intellectual property experts, administrative law judges and others. I look forward to swearing in a few of them in just a few minutes.

These new employees are excited to be in a job that will allow them to help inventors who walk through these doors and want to learn more about how to get a patent.

And as this new patent office becomes integrated into the community, we'll ask questions that we've never been able to ask before:

- What can we learn from innovators in Detroit to make our patent system even more effective?
- How can we work more closely with regional economic development groups and others who share our mission of helping businesses create jobs?
- And, perhaps eventually: How can we create a tailored suite of IP services for startups, incubators, and accelerators who work in the Detroit region?

Our vision is to serve job creators in Detroit, the Great Lakes, and throughout the U.S., better than ever before. After all, innovation is part of America's DNA.

We are going to put more patents in the hands of enterprising Americans so that they can, in turn, attract capital and put their business plans into action.

Because more patents mean more good jobs, and a recent Commerce Department report showed that industries that rely heavily on intellectual property protection support at least 40 million jobs—and these jobs pay about 42 percent more than others.

So a better patent system means stronger economic security for millions of middle class families.

And we can't stop there. Our innovation-driven economy demands that we do more to support R&D, to help universities like Michigan, Michigan State and Wayne State push the research discoveries into the marketplace, and to make sure our young people can succeed in science, technology, engineering and math—the STEM fields.

And—as the president has said—we must stop rewarding businesses that ship jobs overseas and start helping those that are trying to keep jobs here or bring them back.

Clearly, we must use all of the tools at our disposal to ensure that America will continue to drive innovation and be a magnet for good jobs for our middle class.

After all, our ability to innovate and compete as a nation will determine what kind of economy—and what kind of country—we pass along to the next generation.

Again, congratulations to Detroit on their new patent office. And thank you all in advance for helping ensure its success in the coming years.

With a little help from this new Patent office, I'm confident that our innovators here and across the country will keep America strong and competitive in the 21st century.