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AAU Association of American Universities  
ACE American Council on Education  
AAMC Association of American Medical Colleges

APLU Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
AUTM Association of University Technology Managers  
COGR Council on Governmental Relations

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May 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, Room S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, Room S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write as the leaders of six higher education associations to respectfully request that you bring S. 515, the Patent Reform Act of 2009, before the full Senate for its consideration as soon as possible.

Our associations represent America's universities, the principal source of the basic research that expands the frontiers of knowledge. As expressions of their commitment to making knowledge available to all and as a reflection of their stewardship of public research funds, universities employ the patent system to transfer discoveries made through university research into the commercial sector for development into useful products and processes to the benefit of society.

Since it began working to reform the U.S. patent system four years ago, Congress has achieved significant progress in developing legislation that would enhance the capacity of the patent system to promote innovation and strengthen America's economic competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, resolution of several difficult issues stalled completion of this process. On April 2, the Senate Judiciary Committee adopted a comprehensive amendment that represented a broad and balanced compromise on those difficult issues. The resulting bill, reported by the Committee on a 15 – 4 vote, will substantially strengthen the ability of the patent system to foster innovation.

In defining university views, our associations have drawn heavily on the seminal report on patent reform by the National Academies of Sciences. S. 515 incorporates a number of the recommendations of that report for improving patent quality and removing subjective elements of current patent law that foster costly and unproductive litigation.

We believe there are certain modifications of the legislation that would further improve it, and we will continue to work with the Judiciary Committee to explore opportunities for modifications that strengthen the bill while preserving the careful balance represented by S. 515 as reported. We recognize and support the compromises that must be made to balance fairly and effectively the legitimate but sometimes conflicting interests of the many sectors affected by this legislation. As associations of public service institutions that interact with virtually all of these sectors, we believe patent legislation which balances and incorporates the principal interests of all parties and strengthens the U.S. patent system overall should be broadly supported. S. 515 is such legislation.

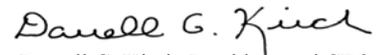
Sincerely,



Robert M. Berdahl, President  
Association of American Universities



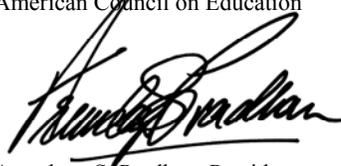
Molly Corbett Broad, President  
American Council on Education



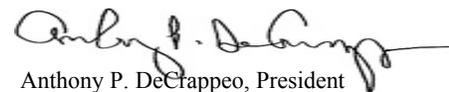
Darrell G. Kirch, President and CEO  
Association of American Medical  
Colleges



Peter McPherson, President  
Association of Public and Land-grant  
Universities



Arundeeep S. Pradhan, President  
Association of University Technology  
Managers



Anthony P. DeCrappeo, President  
Council on Governmental Relations

cc: Senate Committee on the Judiciary