Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your leadership in advancing innovation and competition legislation. We urge you to keep the Inventor Diversity for Economic Advancement (IDEA) Act in the final bill. The IDEA Act is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would direct the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to collect inventors’ demographic data on a voluntary basis and make this information available in the aggregate for research. Both chambers have now passed the IDEA Act as part of their innovation and competition bills, and we urge you to keep it in the final version sent to President Biden’s desk.

USPTO and leading researchers have found that women, people of color, and lower-income Americans patent inventions at significantly lower rates than their representation in the population.

- Less than 13 percent of all inventors who hold a U.S. patent are women. Women hold only 5.5 percent of commercialized patents.
- Black and Hispanic college graduates patent at half the rate of White college graduates. Patenting activity by Black inventors peaked in 1899 and has not recovered.
- Children in families in the top one percent of income are ten times more likely to patent in their lifetimes than children in the entire bottom half of income.

Closing the patent gaps would quadruple the number of American inventors, increase annual U.S. GDP by almost $1 trillion, and result in exciting new and different inventions.

We must measure what matters. Currently, the USPTO does not collect demographic data on inventors. Collecting this data is a crucial and necessary step toward strengthening our economy, maintaining U.S. global technological leadership, and building a more diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem, complete with new inventors, new ideas, and new technologies.

Thank you for your leadership. Please keep the IDEA Act in your negotiated innovation and competition package so that we waste no time in addressing the patent diversity gaps and realizing the benefits of expanding participation in American invention and patenting.

Sincerely,
3M Company
American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA)
AnitaB.org
Association of American Universities (AAU)
AUTM
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)
Biocom California
Corning Inc.
DivX, LLC
Finjan Holdings, LLC
Foresight Science and Technology Inc.
FutureForward
Innovation Council
Innovation Partnerships at the University of Michigan
Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)
Intellectual Property Owners Association (IPO)
Interdigital
Jackson State University
Native American Intellectual Property Enterprise Council (NAIPEC)
NJEdge Inc.
Nokia
Project Invent
Qualcomm
Social Equity Strategies
Society of Women Engineers (SWE)
Sonos, Inc.
The Michelson Center for Public Policy
University of Oregon
University of Minnesota, Technology Commercialization
UWM Research Foundation, Inc.
WiLAN Labs
Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF)
Women in Engineering ProActive Network (WEPAN)
VentureWell

Cc:
The Honorable Dick Durbin, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Jerry Nadler, Chairman, U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary