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House of Representatives Passes the Patent Reform Act of 2007, Votes to Bring Balance to Our Nation's Patent System

Legislation will allow innovation to flourish while strengthening our nation's economy

WASHINGTON – The House of Representatives today took a major step to make much needed reforms to our nation's patent system by passing H.R. 1908, the Patent Reform Act of 2007, this afternoon by a vote of 220 – 175. The bipartisan PRA will improve our patent system by helping to spur innovation, keep America competitive in the global marketplace and protect and create good high-paying jobs here at home while protecting the rights of innovators.

H.R. 1908, sponsored by Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.) and Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), is the culmination of nearly a decade of study and debate by policy makers, academics, industry leaders and legal scholars seeking to update our patent system that has not seen serious reform in over half a century.

"Today's vote in the House is a victory for American innovators and consumers," said Jonathan Yarowsky, policy counsel and spokesperson for the Coalition for Patent Fairness. "The current patent system has become bogged down by delays, prolonged disputes and confusing jurisprudence. This comprehensive legislation is much needed, and will help drive innovation, which itself is the driver for American competitiveness and consumer choice. There is now undeniable momentum, and this will continue in the Senate with the same bipartisan and balanced approach undertaken in the House. The Coalition will do its part to work productively to achieve this important goal."

The call for reform has been loud and vast with the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Solicitor General, the National Academy of Sciences, the Council on Foreign Relations, leading editorial boards and a wide range of businesses ranging from high-tech to financial services to traditional manufacturing all calling on Congress to act. Most recently, the five university, higher education, and medical college associations engaged on patent reform – the Association of American Universities, the American Council on Education, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the Association of American Medical Colleges, and the Council on Governmental Relations – expressed their "support for bringing H.R. 1908, the Patent Reform Act of 2007, before the House for its consideration."

Congress began seriously debating patent reform in 2001 and the House Judiciary Committee has conducted more than 20 hearings during that time. Over 150 working groups comprised of experts from industry, government and academia have worked through compromises over the last six years and this reform legislation has been debated for the last two Congresses.

About the Coalition for Patent Fairness

The Coalition for Patent Fairness is committed to the passage of legislation that will foster innovation and economic growth. Representing a broad range of companies and trade associations in the technology, financial services, energy, chemical, manufacturing and media industries, the Coalition's members include Amazon.com, Apple, Autodesk, Business Software Alliance, Cisco Systems, Comcast, Dell, Electrolux, Financial Services Roundtable, Google, HP, Information Technology Industry Council, Intel, Micron Technology, Inc., Microsoft, Oracle, Palm, Inc., RIM, SAP, Symantec, TechNet, Time Warner and Visa. For more information, visit www.patentfairness.org.

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