



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of
REALTORS®**

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December 9, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee
316 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Senator Lee,

On behalf of the more than one million members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR), we wish to thank you for the introduction of S. 1720, the “Patent Transparency and Improvements Act.” We view the reforms in this bill as an important step in protecting innovators and main street businesses from broad claims of patent infringement based on patents of questionable validity all brought by non-practicing entities.

NAR, whose members identify themselves as REALTORS®, represents a wide variety of real estate industry professionals. REALTORS® have been early adopters of technology and are industry innovators who understand that consumers today are seeking real estate information and services that are fast, convenient and comprehensive. Increasingly, technology innovations are driving the delivery of real estate services and the future of REALTORS® businesses.

As technology users, NAR and several of its members recently faced onerous patent infringement litigation over questionable patents dealing with location based search capabilities. These suits were brought by patent holding companies and other non-practicing entities. They were eventually settled in a multi-million dollar settlement. In addition, our broker and agent members are increasingly dealing with demand letters to license commonly used technologies like scanner- copiers and online alert functions. Our members know firsthand that “patent trolls” divert significant time and money from their businesses.

Without needed reforms that assure that asserted patent rights are legitimate and frivolous litigation schemes are curtailed, the ability of businesses owned by REALTORS®, many of which are small businesses, to grow, innovate and better serve modern consumers will be put at risk. NAR supports the reforms in the Patent Transparency and Improvements Act as a way to rebalance a patent system that is increasingly a target of uncertainty and abuse.

We also support legislation introduced by Senators Schumer (S. 866, The Patent Quality Improvement Act), Cornyn (S. 1013, the Patent Abuse Reduction Act) and Hatch (S. 1612, The Patent Litigation Integrity Act) and hope to see these reforms included in a final patent litigation reform package.

We welcome the introduction of the Innovation Act and look forward to working with you to create needed reforms to the patent system that will truly promote innovation and expand job creation.

Sincerely,

Steve Brown
2014 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary



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