

CONNECT helps found the Small Business Coalition On Patent Legislation

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Consistent with earlier decisions of CONNECT's Public Policy Committee to seek improvements in the pending patent reform legislation, CONNECT combined forces with like-minded organizations that represent and assist early-stage startup companies and small innovators to form the *Small Business Coalition On Patent Legislation*. Current members of the Coalition are shown below.



Recognizing the need to amplify the unheard voices of small business innovators in the patent reform debate, the Coalition was created to draw attention to current patent reform proposals that have not been addressed by established patent stakeholders and that would be uniquely harmful to startups and small business patentees if enacted.

The Coalition had already begun producing position statements on critical patent reform matters arising under the proposed Patent Reform Act of 2009 (Senate bill S. 515 and House bill H.R. 1260). Members of the Coalition are particularly concerned about two provisions in the proposed patent reform bills: (i) repeal of first inventors' rights, changing the patent priority determining date from the date of invention to the date of filing the application; and (ii) provisions instituting new and additional post-grant proceedings at the U.S. Patent Office to challenge issued patents. Both changes would sharply favor large companies and market incumbents and will be highly detrimental to the Coalition's small-business and startup constituents.

The Coalition took its first steps in late October 2009 during visits with lawmakers in Washington D.C., addressing its major concerns regarding the two provisions listed above. Since then, the Administration had weighed-in on patent reform, generally lending support to the provisions that the Coalition opposes. The Coalition announced its establishment, its purposes and its initial members in a December press release available [here](#).

In addressing concerns about the Administration's support and advocacy for these two provisions, the Coalition sent a letter to Karen G. Mills, Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), urging the SBA to assume its unique role, expertise and mandate in evaluating the proposed patent reform legislation's effects on small businesses. The Coalition's letter contained a lot of details and facts raising concerns that the U.S. Department of Commerce's support for these provisions had not adequately taken into account the circumstances of small-business patentees. The Small Business Coalition on Patent Legislation's letter to Administrator Mills can be accessed [here](#).

Coalition's Participants

CONNECT is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining the growth of innovative technology and life science businesses in San Diego. Since 1985, CONNECT has assisted in the formation and development of over 2,000 companies and is widely regarded as the world's most successful regional program linking inventors and entrepreneurs with the resources they need for success. www.connect.org

The **National Small Business Association** (NSBA) is a national non-profit membership organization founded in 1937, representing America's small business companies and entrepreneurs. Reaching more than 150,000 small businesses, NSBA is the first and oldest national small-business advocacy organization in the United States. www.nsba.biz

IP Advocate is a non-profit organization dedicated to equipping the academic research community with critical information needed to understand and traverse the complex flow of policy, law and procedure from innovation through technology transfer and commercialization of intellectual property. www.ipadvocate.org

The **American Innovators for Patent Reform** (AIPR) is a coalition of inventors, patent owners, researchers, engineers, entrepreneurs, licensing executives, patent agents and attorneys, and others involved in creating or protecting innovation and advocating for stronger patent protection. www.aminn.org

The **National Association of Patent Practitioners** (NAPP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting patent practitioners and those working in the field of patent law in matters relating to patent law, its practice, and technological advances. www.napp.org

The **Professional Inventors Alliance USA** (PIAUSA) is a national organization promoting inventor-entrepreneur and small business interests since 1993. PIAUSA works to protect American invention and encourage innovation by providing the nation's independent inventors a united voice to improve public policy. www.piausa.org