or trial as defendants or counterclaim defendants based solely on allegations that they each have infringed the patent or patents in suit.

CHAPTER 30—PRIOR ART CITATIONS TO OFFICE AND EX PARTE REEXAMINATION OF PATENTS

Sec.
[301. Citation of prior art.]
301. Citation of prior art and written statements.

* * * * * * *

[§ 301. Citation of prior art

[Any person at any time may cite to the Office in writing prior art consisting of patents or printed publications which that person believes to have a bearing on the patentability of any claim of a particular patent. If the person explains in writing the pertinency and manner of applying such prior art to at least one claim of the patent, the citation of such prior art and the explanation thereof will become a part of the official file of the patent. At the written request of the person citing the prior art, his or her identity will be excluded from the patent file and kept confidential.]

§ 301. Citation of prior art and written statements

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any person at any time may cite to the Office in writing—

(1) prior art consisting of patents or printed publications which that person believes to have a bearing on the patentability of any claim of a particular patent; or

(2) statements of the patent owner filed in a proceeding before a Federal court or the Office in which the patent owner took a position on the scope of any claim of a particular patent.

(b) OFFICIAL FILE.—If the person citing prior art or written statements pursuant to subsection (a) explains in writing the pertinence and manner of applying the prior art or written statements to at least 1 claim of the patent, the citation of the prior art or written statements and the explanation thereof shall become a part of the official file of the patent.

(c) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—A party that submits a written statement pursuant to subsection (a)(2) shall include any other documents, pleadings, or evidence from the proceeding in which the statement was filed that addresses the written statement.

(d) LIMITATIONS.—A written statement submitted pursuant to subsection (a)(2), and additional information submitted pursuant to subsection (c), shall not be considered by the Office for any purpose other than to determine the proper meaning of a patent claim in a proceeding that is ordered or instituted pursuant to section 304, 314, or 324. If any such written statement or additional information is subject to an applicable protective order, such statement or information shall be redacted to exclude information that is subject to that order.

(e) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Upon the written request of the person citing prior art or written statements pursuant to subsection (a), that person's identity shall be excluded from the patent file and kept confidential.

§ 302. Request for reexamination

Any person at any time may file a request for reexamination by the Office of any claim of a patent on the basis of any prior art cited under the provisions of section 301 [of this title]. The request must be in writing and must be accompanied by payment of a reexamination fee established by the Director pursuant to the provisions of section 41 [of this title]. The request must set forth the pertinency and manner of applying cited prior art to every claim for which reexamination is requested. Unless the requesting person is the owner of the patent, the Director promptly will send a copy of the request to the owner of record of the patent.

§ 303. Determination of issue by Director

(a) Within three months following the filing of a request for reexamination under the provisions of section 302 [of this title], the Director will determine whether a substantial new question of patentability affecting any claim of the patent concerned is raised by the request, with or without consideration of other patents or printed publications. On his own initiative, and any time, the Director may determine whether a substantial new question of patentability is raised by patents and publications discovered by him or cited under the provisions of [section 301 of this title] *section 301 or 302*. The existence of a substantial new question of patentability is not precluded by the fact that a patent or printed publication was previously cited by or to the Office or considered by the Office.

* * * * * * *

(c) A determination by the Director pursuant to subsection (a) of this section that no substantial new question of patentability has been raised will be final and nonappealable. Upon such a determination, the Director may refund a portion of the reexamination fee required under section 302 [of this title].

§ 304. Reexamination order by Director

If, in a determination made under the provisions of subsection 303(a) [of this title], the Director finds that a substantial new question of patentability affecting any claim of a patent is raised, the determination will include an order for reexamination of the patent for resolution of the question. The patent owner will be given a reasonable period, not less than two months from the date a copy of the determination is given or mailed to him, within which he may file a statement on such question, including any amendment to his patent and new claim or claims he may wish to propose, for consideration in the reexamination. If the patent owner files such a statement, he promptly will serve a copy of it on the person who has requested reexamination under the provisions of section 302 [of this title]. Within a period of two months from the date of service, that person may file and have considered in the reexamination a reply to any statement filed by the patent owner. That person promptly will serve on the patent owner a copy of any reply filed.

§ 305. Conduct of reexamination proceedings

After the times for filing the statement and reply provided for by section 304 [of this title] have expired, reexamination will be

conducted according to the procedures established for initial examination under the provisions of sections 132 and 133 [of this title]. In any reexamination proceeding under this chapter, the patent owner will be permitted to propose any amendment to his patent and a new claim or claims thereto, in order to distinguish the invention as claimed from the prior art cited under the provisions of section 301 [of this title], or in response to a decision adverse to the patentability of a claim of a patent. No proposed amended or new claim enlarging the scope of a claim of the patent will be permitted in a reexamination proceeding under this chapter. All reexamination proceedings under this section, including any appeal to the [Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences] *Patent Trial and Appeal Board*, will be conducted with special dispatch within the Office.

§ 306. Appeal

The patent owner involved in a reexamination proceeding under this chapter may appeal under the provisions of section 134 [of this title], and may seek court review under the provisions of sections 141 to [145 of this title] *144*, with respect to any decision adverse to the patentability of any original or proposed amended or new claim of the patent.

§ 307. Certificate of patentability, unpatentability, and claim cancellation

(a) * * *

(b) Any proposed amended or new claim determined to be patentable and incorporated into a patent following a reexamination proceeding will have the same effect as that specified in section 252 [of this title] for reissued patents on the right of any person who made, purchased, or used within the United States, or imported into the United States, anything patented by such proposed amended or new claim, or who made substantial preparation for the same, prior to issuance of a certificate under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

[CHAPTER 31—OPTIONAL INTER PARTES REEXAMINATION PROCEDURES

[§ 311. Request for inter partes reexamination

[(a) IN GENERAL.—Any third-party requester at any time may file a request for inter partes reexamination by the Office of a patent on the basis of any prior art cited under the provisions of section 301.

[(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The request shall—

[(1) be in writing, include the identity of the real party in interest, and be accompanied by payment of an inter partes reexamination fee established by the Director under section 41; and

[(2) set forth the pertinency and manner of applying cited prior art to every claim for which reexamination is requested.

[(c) COPY.—The Director promptly shall send a copy of the request to the owner of record of the patent.

[§ 312. Determination of issue by Director

[(a) REEXAMINATION.—Not later than 3 months after the filing of a request for inter partes reexamination under section 311, the Director shall determine whether a substantial new question of patentability affecting any claim of the patent concerned is raised by the request, with or without consideration of other patents or printed publications. The existence of a substantial new question of patentability is not precluded by the fact that a patent or printed publication was previously cited by or to the Office or considered by the Office.

[(b) RECORD.—A record of the Director's determination under subsection (a) shall be placed in the official file of the patent, and a copy shall be promptly given or mailed to the owner of record of the patent and to the third-party requester.

[(c) FINAL DECISION.—A determination by the Director under subsection (a) shall be final and non-appealable. Upon a determination that no substantial new question of patentability has been raised, the Director may refund a portion of the inter partes reexamination fee required under section 311.

[§ 313. Inter partes reexamination order by Director

[If, in a determination made under section 312(a), the Director finds that a substantial new question of patentability affecting a claim of a patent is raised, the determination shall include an order for inter partes reexamination of the patent for resolution of the question. The order may be accompanied by the initial action of the Patent and Trademark Office on the merits of the inter partes reexamination conducted in accordance with section 314.

[§ 314. Conduct of inter partes reexamination proceedings

[(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, reexamination shall be conducted according to the procedures established for initial examination under the provisions of sections 132 and 133. In any inter partes reexamination proceeding under this chapter, the patent owner shall be permitted to propose any amendment to the patent and a new claim or claims, except that no proposed amended or new claim enlarging the scope of the claims of the patent shall be permitted.

[(b) RESPONSE.—(1) With the exception of the inter partes reexamination request, any document filed by either the patent owner or the third-party requester shall be served on the other party. In addition, the Office shall send to the third-party requester a copy of any communication sent by the Office to the patent owner concerning the patent subject to the inter partes reexamination proceeding.

[(2) Each time that the patent owner files a response to an action on the merits from the Patent and Trademark Office, the third-party requester shall have one opportunity to file written comments addressing issues raised by the action of the Office or the patent owner's response thereto, if those written comments are received by the Office within 30 days after the date of service of the patent owner's response.

[(c) SPECIAL DISPATCH.—Unless otherwise provided by the Director for good cause, all inter partes reexamination proceedings under this section, including any appeal to the Board of Patent Ap-

peals and Interferences, shall be conducted with special dispatch within the Office.

[§ 315. Appeal

[(a) PATENT OWNER.—The patent owner involved in an inter partes reexamination proceeding under this chapter—

[(1) may appeal under the provisions of section 134 and may appeal under the provisions of sections 141 through 144, with respect to any decision adverse to the patentability of any original or proposed amended or new claim of the patent; and

[(2) may be a party to any appeal taken by a third-party requester under subsection (b).

[(b) THIRD-PARTY REQUESTER.—A third-party requester—

[(1) may appeal under the provisions of section 134, and may appeal under the provisions of sections 141 through 144, with respect to any final decision favorable to the patentability of any original or proposed amended or new claim of the patent; and

[(2) may, subject to subsection (c), be a party to any appeal taken by the patent owner under the provisions of section 134 or sections 141 through 144.

[(c) CIVIL ACTION.—A third-party requester whose request for an inter partes reexamination results in an order under section 313 is estopped from asserting at a later time, in any civil action arising in whole or in part under section 1338 of title 28, the invalidity of any claim finally determined to be valid and patentable on any ground which the third-party requester raised or could have raised during the inter partes reexamination proceedings. This subsection does not prevent the assertion of invalidity based on newly discovered prior art unavailable to the third-party requester and the Patent and Trademark Office at the time of the inter partes reexamination proceedings.

[§ 316. Certificate of patentability, unpatentability, and claim cancellation

[(a) IN GENERAL.—In an inter partes reexamination proceeding under this chapter, when the time for appeal has expired or any appeal proceeding has terminated, the Director shall issue and publish a certificate canceling any claim of the patent finally determined to be unpatentable, confirming any claim of the patent determined to be patentable, and incorporating in the patent any proposed amended or new claim determined to be patentable.

[(b) AMENDED OR NEW CLAIM.—Any proposed amended or new claim determined to be patentable and incorporated into a patent following an inter partes reexamination proceeding shall have the same effect as that specified in section 252 of this title for reissued patents on the right of any person who made, purchased, or used within the United States, or imported into the United States, anything patented by such proposed amended or new claim, or who made substantial preparation therefor, prior to issuance of a certificate under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

[§ 317. Inter partes reexamination prohibited

[(a) ORDER FOR REEXAMINATION.—Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, once an order for inter partes reexamination

of a patent has been issued under section 313, neither the third-party requester nor its privies, may file a subsequent request for inter partes reexamination of the patent until an inter partes reexamination certificate is issued and published under section 316, unless authorized by the Director.

[(b) FINAL DECISION.—Once a final decision has been entered against a party in a civil action arising in whole or in part under section 1338 of title 28, that the party has not sustained its burden of proving the invalidity of any patent claim in suit or if a final decision in an inter partes reexamination proceeding instituted by a third-party requester is favorable to the patentability of any original or proposed amended or new claim of the patent, then neither that party nor its privies may thereafter request an inter partes reexamination of any such patent claim on the basis of issues which that party or its privies raised or could have raised in such civil action or inter partes reexamination proceeding, and an inter partes reexamination requested by that party or its privies on the basis of such issues may not thereafter be maintained by the Office, notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter. This subsection does not prevent the assertion of invalidity based on newly discovered prior art unavailable to the third-party requester and the Patent and Trademark Office at the time of the inter partes reexamination proceedings.

[§ 318. Stay of litigation

[Once an order for inter partes reexamination of a patent has been issued under section 313, the patent owner may obtain a stay of any pending litigation which involves an issue of patentability of any claims of the patent which are the subject of the inter partes reexamination order, unless the court before which such litigation is pending determines that a stay would not serve the interests of justice.]

CHAPTER 31—INTER PARTES REVIEW

Sec.
311. Inter partes review.
312. Petitions.
313. Preliminary response to petition.
314. Institution of inter partes review.
315. Relation to other proceedings or actions.
316. Conduct of inter partes review.
317. Settlement.
318. Decision of the Board.
319. Appeal.

§ 311. Inter partes review

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this chapter, a person who is not the owner of a patent may file with the Office a petition to institute an inter partes review of the patent. The Director shall establish, by regulation, fees to be paid by the person requesting the review, in such amounts as the Director determines to be reasonable, considering the aggregate costs of the review.

(b) SCOPE.—A petitioner in an inter partes review may request to cancel as unpatentable 1 or more claims of a patent only on a ground that could be raised under section 102 or 103 and only on the basis of prior art consisting of patents or printed publications.

(c) FILING DEADLINE.—A petition for inter partes review shall be filed after the later of either—

(1) the date that is 1 year after the grant of a patent or issuance of a reissue of a patent; or

(2) if a post-grant review is instituted under chapter 32, the date of the termination of such post-grant review.

§ 312. Petitions

(a) REQUIREMENTS OF PETITION.—A petition filed under section 311 may be considered only if—

(1) the petition is accompanied by payment of the fee established by the Director under section 311;

(2) the petition identifies all real parties in interest;

(3) the petition identifies, in writing and with particularity, each claim challenged, the grounds on which the challenge to each claim is based, and the evidence that supports the grounds for the challenge to each claim, including—

(A) copies of patents and printed publications that the petitioner relies upon in support of the petition; and

(B) affidavits or declarations of supporting evidence and opinions, if the petitioner relies on expert opinions;

(4) the petition provides such other information as the Director may require by regulation; and

(5) the petitioner provides copies of any of the documents required under paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) to the patent owner or, if applicable, the designated representative of the patent owner.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—As soon as practicable after the receipt of a petition under section 311, the Director shall make the petition available to the public.

§ 313. Preliminary response to petition

If an inter partes review petition is filed under section 311, the patent owner shall have the right to file a preliminary response to the petition, within a time period set by the Director, that sets forth reasons why no inter partes review should be instituted based upon the failure of the petition to meet any requirement of this chapter.

§ 314. Institution of inter partes review

(a) THRESHOLD.—The Director may not authorize an inter partes review to commence unless the Director determines that the information presented in the petition filed under section 311 and any response filed under section 313 shows that there is a reasonable likelihood that the petitioner would prevail with respect to at least 1 of the claims challenged in the petition.

(b) TIMING.—The Director shall determine whether to institute an inter partes review under this chapter pursuant to a petition filed under section 311 within 3 months after—

(1) receiving a preliminary response to the petition under section 313; or

(2) if no such preliminary response is filed, the last date on which such response may be filed.

(c) NOTICE.—The Director shall notify the petitioner and patent owner, in writing, of the Director's determination under subsection (a), and shall make such notice available to the public as soon as

is practicable. Such notice shall include the date on which the review shall commence.

(d) NO APPEAL.—The determination by the Director whether to institute an inter partes review under this section shall be final and nonappealable.

§ 315. Relation to other proceedings or actions

(a) INFRINGER'S CIVIL ACTION.—

(1) INTER PARTES REVIEW BARRED BY CIVIL ACTION.—An inter partes review may not be instituted if, before the date on which the petition for such a review is filed, the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner filed a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of the patent.

(2) STAY OF CIVIL ACTION.—If the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner files a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of the patent on or after the date on which the petitioner files a petition for inter partes review of the patent, that civil action shall be automatically stayed until either—

(A) the patent owner moves the court to lift the stay;

(B) the patent owner files a civil action or counterclaim alleging that the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner has infringed the patent; or

(C) the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner moves the court to dismiss the civil action.

(3) TREATMENT OF COUNTERCLAIM.—A counterclaim challenging the validity of a claim of a patent does not constitute a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of a patent for purposes of this subsection.

(b) PATENT OWNER'S ACTION.—An inter partes review may not be instituted if the petition requesting the proceeding is filed more than 1 year after the date on which the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner is served with a complaint alleging infringement of the patent. The time limitation set forth in the preceding sentence shall not apply to a request for joinder under subsection (c).

(c) JOINDER.—If the Director institutes an inter partes review, the Director, in his or her discretion, may join as a party to that inter partes review any person who properly files a petition under section 311 that the Director, after receiving a preliminary response under section 313 or the expiration of the time for filing such a response, determines warrants the institution of an inter partes review under section 314.

(d) MULTIPLE PROCEEDINGS.—Notwithstanding sections 135(a), 251, and 252, and chapter 30, during the pendency of an inter partes review, if another proceeding or matter involving the patent is before the Office, the Director may determine the manner in which the inter partes review or other proceeding or matter may proceed, including providing for stay, transfer, consolidation, or termination of any such matter or proceeding.

(e) ESTOPPEL.—

(1) PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE OFFICE.—The petitioner in an inter partes review of a claim in a patent under this chapter that results in a final written decision under section 318(a), or the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, may not re-

quest or maintain a proceeding before the Office with respect to that claim on any ground that the petitioner raised or reasonably could have raised during that inter partes review.

(2) CIVIL ACTIONS AND OTHER PROCEEDINGS.—The petitioner in an inter partes review of a claim in a patent under this chapter that results in a final written decision under section 318(a), or the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, may not assert either in a civil action arising in whole or in part under section 1338 of title 28 or in a proceeding before the International Trade Commission under section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930 that the claim is invalid on any ground that the petitioner raised or reasonably could have raised during that inter partes review.

§ 316. Conduct of inter partes review

(a) REGULATIONS.—The Director shall prescribe regulations—

(1) providing that the file of any proceeding under this chapter shall be made available to the public, except that any petition or document filed with the intent that it be sealed shall, if accompanied by a motion to seal, be treated as sealed pending the outcome of the ruling on the motion;

(2) setting forth the standards for the showing of sufficient grounds to institute a review under section 314(a);

(3) establishing procedures for the submission of supplemental information after the petition is filed;

(4) establishing and governing inter partes review under this chapter and the relationship of such review to other proceedings under this title;

(5) setting forth standards and procedures for discovery of relevant evidence, including that such discovery shall be limited to—

(A) the deposition of witnesses submitting affidavits or declarations; and

(B) what is otherwise necessary in the interest of justice;

(6) prescribing sanctions for abuse of discovery, abuse of process, or any other improper use of the proceeding, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or an unnecessary increase in the cost of the proceeding;

(7) providing for protective orders governing the exchange and submission of confidential information;

(8) providing for the filing by the patent owner of a response to the petition under section 313 after an inter partes review has been instituted, and requiring that the patent owner file with such response, through affidavits or declarations, any additional factual evidence and expert opinions on which the patent owner relies in support of the response;

(9) setting forth standards and procedures for allowing the patent owner to move to amend the patent under subsection (d) to cancel a challenged claim or propose a reasonable number of substitute claims, and ensuring that any information submitted by the patent owner in support of any amendment entered under subsection (d) is made available to the public as part of the prosecution history of the patent;

(10) providing either party with the right to an oral hearing as part of the proceeding;

(11) requiring that the final determination in an inter partes review be issued not later than 1 year after the date on which the Director notices the institution of a review under this chapter, except that the Director may, for good cause shown, extend the 1-year period by not more than 6 months, and may adjust the time periods in this paragraph in the case of joinder under section 315(c);

(12) setting a time period for requesting joinder under section 315(c); and

(13) providing the petitioner with at least 1 opportunity to file written comments within a time period established by the Director.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In prescribing regulations under this section, the Director shall consider the effect of any such regulation on the economy, the integrity of the patent system, the efficient administration of the Office, and the ability of the Office to timely complete proceedings instituted under this chapter.

(c) PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD.—The Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall, in accordance with section 6, conduct each inter partes review instituted under this chapter.

(d) AMENDMENT OF THE PATENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During an inter partes review instituted under this chapter, the patent owner may file 1 motion to amend the patent in 1 or more of the following ways:

(A) Cancel any challenged patent claim.

(B) For each challenged claim, propose a reasonable number of substitute claims.

(2) ADDITIONAL MOTIONS.—Additional motions to amend may be permitted upon the joint request of the petitioner and the patent owner to materially advance the settlement of a proceeding under section 317, or as permitted by regulations prescribed by the Director.

(3) SCOPE OF CLAIMS.—An amendment under this subsection may not enlarge the scope of the claims of the patent or introduce new matter.

(e) EVIDENTIARY STANDARDS.—In an inter partes review instituted under this chapter, the petitioner shall have the burden of proving a proposition of unpatentability by a preponderance of the evidence.

§ 317. Settlement

(a) IN GENERAL.—An inter partes review instituted under this chapter shall be terminated with respect to any petitioner upon the joint request of the petitioner and the patent owner, unless the Office has decided the merits of the proceeding before the request for termination is filed. If the inter partes review is terminated with respect to a petitioner under this section, no estoppel under section 315(e) shall attach to the petitioner, or to the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, on the basis of that petitioner's institution of that inter partes review. If no petitioner remains in the inter partes review, the Office may terminate the review or proceed to a final written decision under section 318(a).

(b) AGREEMENTS IN WRITING.—Any agreement or understanding between the patent owner and a petitioner, including any collateral agreements referred to in such agreement or understanding, made in connection with, or in contemplation of, the termination of an inter partes review under this section shall be in writing and a true copy of such agreement or understanding shall be filed in the Office before the termination of the inter partes review as between the parties. At the request of a party to the proceeding, the agreement or understanding shall be treated as business confidential information, shall be kept separate from the file of the involved patents, and shall be made available only to Federal Government agencies on written request, or to any person on a showing of good cause.

§ 318. Decision of the Board

(a) FINAL WRITTEN DECISION.—If an inter partes review is instituted and not dismissed under this chapter, the Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall issue a final written decision with respect to the patentability of any patent claim challenged by the petitioner and any new claim added under section 316(d).

(b) CERTIFICATE.—If the Patent Trial and Appeal Board issues a final written decision under subsection (a) and the time for appeal has expired or any appeal has terminated, the Director shall issue and publish a certificate canceling any claim of the patent finally determined to be unpatentable, confirming any claim of the patent determined to be patentable, and incorporating in the patent by operation of the certificate any new or amended claim determined to be patentable.

(c) AMENDED OR NEW CLAIM.—Any proposed amended or new claim determined to be patentable and incorporated into a patent following an inter partes review under this chapter shall have the same effect as that specified in section 252 for reissued patents on the right of any person who made, purchased, or used within the United States, or imported into the United States, anything patented by such proposed amended or new claim, or who made substantial preparation therefor, before the issuance of a certificate under subsection (b).

(d) DATA ON LENGTH OF REVIEW.—The Office shall make available to the public data describing the length of time between the institution of, and the issuance of a final written decision under subsection (a) for, each inter partes review.

§ 319. Appeal

A party dissatisfied with the final written decision of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board under section 318(a) may appeal the decision pursuant to sections 141 through 144. Any party to the inter partes review shall have the right to be a party to the appeal.

CHAPTER 32—POST-GRANT REVIEW

Sec.
321. Post-grant review.
322. Petitions.
323. Preliminary response to petition.
324. Institution of post-grant review.
325. Relation to other proceedings or actions.
326. Conduct of post-grant review.

327. Settlement.
328. Decision of the Board.
329. Appeal.

§ 321. Post-grant review

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this chapter, a person who is not the patent owner may file with the Office a petition to institute a post-grant review of a patent. The Director shall establish, by regulation, fees to be paid by the person requesting the review, in such amounts as the Director determines to be reasonable, considering the aggregate costs of the post-grant review.

(b) SCOPE.—A petitioner in a post-grant review may request to cancel as unpatentable 1 or more claims of a patent on any ground that could be raised under paragraph (2) or (3) of section 282(b) (relating to invalidity of the patent or any claim).

(c) FILING DEADLINE.—A petition for a post-grant review may only be filed not later than the date that is 1 year after the date of the grant of the patent or of the issuance of a reissue patent (as the case may be).

§ 322. Petitions

(a) REQUIREMENTS OF PETITION.—A petition filed under section 321 may be considered only if—

(1) the petition is accompanied by payment of the fee established by the Director under section 321;

(2) the petition identifies all real parties in interest;

(3) the petition identifies, in writing and with particularity, each claim challenged, the grounds on which the challenge to each claim is based, and the evidence that supports the grounds for the challenge to each claim, including—

(A) copies of patents and printed publications that the petitioner relies upon in support of the petition; and

(B) affidavits or declarations of supporting evidence and opinions, if the petitioner relies on other factual evidence or on expert opinions;

(4) the petition provides such other information as the Director may require by regulation; and

(5) the petitioner provides copies of any of the documents required under paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) to the patent owner or, if applicable, the designated representative of the patent owner.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—As soon as practicable after the receipt of a petition under section 321, the Director shall make the petition available to the public.

§ 323. Preliminary response to petition

If a post-grant review petition is filed under section 321, the patent owner shall have the right to file a preliminary response to the petition, within a time period set by the Director, that sets forth reasons why no post-grant review should be instituted based upon the failure of the petition to meet any requirement of this chapter.

§ 324. Institution of post-grant review

(a) THRESHOLD.—The Director may not authorize a post-grant review to commence unless the Director determines that the information presented in the petition filed under section 321, if such in-

formation is not rebutted, would demonstrate that it is more likely than not that at least 1 of the claims challenged in the petition is unpatentable.

(b) ADDITIONAL GROUNDS.—The determination required under subsection (a) may also be satisfied by a showing that the petition raises a novel or unsettled legal question that is important to other patents or patent applications.

(c) TIMING.—The Director shall determine whether to institute a post-grant review under this chapter pursuant to a petition filed under section 321 within 3 months after—

(1) receiving a preliminary response to the petition under section 323; or

(2) if no such preliminary response is filed, the last date on which such response may be filed.

(d) NOTICE.—The Director shall notify the petitioner and patent owner, in writing, of the Director's determination under subsection (a) or (b), and shall make such notice available to the public as soon as is practicable. The Director shall make each notice of the institution of a post-grant review available to the public. Such notice shall include the date on which the review shall commence.

(e) NO APPEAL.—The determination by the Director whether to institute a post-grant review under this section shall be final and nonappealable.

§ 325. Relation to other proceedings or actions

(a) INFRINGER'S CIVIL ACTION.—

(1) POST-GRANT REVIEW BARRED BY CIVIL ACTION.—A post-grant review may not be instituted under this chapter if, before the date on which the petition for such a review is filed, the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner filed a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of the patent.

(2) STAY OF CIVIL ACTION.—If the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner files a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of the patent on or after the date on which the petitioner files a petition for post-grant review of the patent, that civil action shall be automatically stayed until either—

(A) the patent owner moves the court to lift the stay;

(B) the patent owner files a civil action or counterclaim alleging that the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner has infringed the patent; or

(C) the petitioner, real party in interest, or privy of the petitioner moves the court to dismiss the civil action.

(3) TREATMENT OF COUNTERCLAIM.—A counterclaim challenging the validity of a claim of a patent does not constitute a civil action challenging the validity of a claim of a patent for purposes of this subsection.

(b) PRELIMINARY INJUNCTIONS.—If a civil action alleging infringement of a patent is filed within 3 months after the date on which the patent is granted, the court may not stay its consideration of the patent owner's motion for a preliminary injunction against infringement of the patent on the basis that a petition for post-grant review has been filed under this chapter or that such a post-grant review has been instituted under this chapter.

(c) JOINDER.—If more than 1 petition for a post-grant review under this chapter is properly filed against the same patent and the Director determines that more than 1 of these petitions warrants the institution of a post-grant review under section 324, the Director may consolidate such reviews into a single post-grant review.

(d) MULTIPLE PROCEEDINGS.—Notwithstanding sections 135(a), 251, and 252, and chapter 30, during the pendency of any post-grant review under this chapter, if another proceeding or matter involving the patent is before the Office, the Director may determine the manner in which the post-grant review or other proceeding or matter may proceed, including providing for the stay, transfer, consolidation, or termination of any such matter or proceeding. In determining whether to institute or order a proceeding under this chapter, chapter 30, or chapter 31, the Director may take into account whether, and reject the petition or request because, the same or substantially the same prior art or arguments previously were presented to the Office.

(e) ESTOPPEL.—

(1) PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE OFFICE.—The petitioner in a post-grant review of a claim in a patent under this chapter that results in a final written decision under section 328(a), or the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, may not request or maintain a proceeding before the Office with respect to that claim on any ground that the petitioner raised or reasonably could have raised during that post-grant review.

(2) CIVIL ACTIONS AND OTHER PROCEEDINGS.—The petitioner in a post-grant review of a claim in a patent under this chapter that results in a final written decision under section 328(a), or the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, may not assert either in a civil action arising in whole or in part under section 1338 of title 28 or in a proceeding before the International Trade Commission under section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930 that the claim is invalid on any ground that the petitioner raised or reasonably could have raised during that post-grant review.

(f) REISSUE PATENTS.—A post-grant review may not be instituted under this chapter if the petition requests cancellation of a claim in a reissue patent that is identical to or narrower than a claim in the original patent from which the reissue patent was issued, and the time limitations in section 321(c) would bar filing a petition for a post-grant review for such original patent.

§ 326. Conduct of post-grant review

(a) REGULATIONS.—The Director shall prescribe regulations—

(1) providing that the file of any proceeding under this chapter shall be made available to the public, except that any petition or document filed with the intent that it be sealed shall, if accompanied by a motion to seal, be treated as sealed pending the outcome of the ruling on the motion;

(2) setting forth the standards for the showing of sufficient grounds to institute a review under subsections (a) and (b) of section 324;

(3) establishing procedures for the submission of supplemental information after the petition is filed;

(4) establishing and governing a post-grant review under this chapter and the relationship of such review to other proceedings under this title;

(5) setting forth standards and procedures for discovery of relevant evidence, including that such discovery shall be limited to evidence directly related to factual assertions advanced by either party in the proceeding;

(6) prescribing sanctions for abuse of discovery, abuse of process, or any other improper use of the proceeding, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or an unnecessary increase in the cost of the proceeding;

(7) providing for protective orders governing the exchange and submission of confidential information;

(8) providing for the filing by the patent owner of a response to the petition under section 323 after a post-grant review has been instituted, and requiring that the patent owner file with such response, through affidavits or declarations, any additional factual evidence and expert opinions on which the patent owner relies in support of the response;

(9) setting forth standards and procedures for allowing the patent owner to move to amend the patent under subsection (d) to cancel a challenged claim or propose a reasonable number of substitute claims, and ensuring that any information submitted by the patent owner in support of any amendment entered under subsection (d) is made available to the public as part of the prosecution history of the patent;

(10) providing either party with the right to an oral hearing as part of the proceeding; and

(11) requiring that the final determination in any post-grant review be issued not later than 1 year after the date on which the Director notices the institution of a proceeding under this chapter, except that the Director may, for good cause shown, extend the 1-year period by not more than 6 months, and may adjust the time periods in this paragraph in the case of joinder under section 325(c).

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In prescribing regulations under this section, the Director shall consider the effect of any such regulation on the economy, the integrity of the patent system, the efficient administration of the Office, and the ability of the Office to timely complete proceedings instituted under this chapter.

(c) PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD.—The Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall, in accordance with section 6, conduct each post-grant review instituted under this chapter.

(d) AMENDMENT OF THE PATENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During a post-grant review instituted under this chapter, the patent owner may file 1 motion to amend the patent in 1 or more of the following ways:

(A) Cancel any challenged patent claim.

(B) For each challenged claim, propose a reasonable number of substitute claims.

(2) ADDITIONAL MOTIONS.—Additional motions to amend may be permitted upon the joint request of the petitioner and the patent owner to materially advance the settlement of a proceeding under section 327, or upon the request of the patent owner for good cause shown.

(3) SCOPE OF CLAIMS.—An amendment under this subsection may not enlarge the scope of the claims of the patent or introduce new matter.

(e) EVIDENTIARY STANDARDS.—In a post-grant review instituted under this chapter, the petitioner shall have the burden of proving a proposition of unpatentability by a preponderance of the evidence.

§ 327. Settlement

(a) IN GENERAL.—A post-grant review instituted under this chapter shall be terminated with respect to any petitioner upon the joint request of the petitioner and the patent owner, unless the Office has decided the merits of the proceeding before the request for termination is filed. If the post-grant review is terminated with respect to a petitioner under this section, no estoppel under section 325(e) shall attach to the petitioner, or to the real party in interest or privy of the petitioner, on the basis of that petitioner's institution of that post-grant review. If no petitioner remains in the post-grant review, the Office may terminate the post-grant review or proceed to a final written decision under section 328(a).

(b) AGREEMENTS IN WRITING.—Any agreement or understanding between the patent owner and a petitioner, including any collateral agreements referred to in such agreement or understanding, made in connection with, or in contemplation of, the termination of a post-grant review under this section shall be in writing, and a true copy of such agreement or understanding shall be filed in the Office before the termination of the post-grant review as between the parties. At the request of a party to the proceeding, the agreement or understanding shall be treated as business confidential information, shall be kept separate from the file of the involved patents, and shall be made available only to Federal Government agencies on written request, or to any person on a showing of good cause.

§ 328. Decision of the Board

(a) FINAL WRITTEN DECISION.—If a post-grant review is instituted and not dismissed under this chapter, the Patent Trial and Appeal Board shall issue a final written decision with respect to the patentability of any patent claim challenged by the petitioner and any new claim added under section 326(d).

(b) CERTIFICATE.—If the Patent Trial and Appeal Board issues a final written decision under subsection (a) and the time for appeal has expired or any appeal has terminated, the Director shall issue and publish a certificate canceling any claim of the patent finally determined to be unpatentable, confirming any claim of the patent determined to be patentable, and incorporating in the patent by operation of the certificate any new or amended claim determined to be patentable.

(c) AMENDED OR NEW CLAIM.—Any proposed amended or new claim determined to be patentable and incorporated into a patent following a post-grant review under this chapter shall have the same effect as that specified in section 252 of this title for reissued patents on the right of any person who made, purchased, or used within the United States, or imported into the United States, anything patented by such proposed amended or new claim, or who

made substantial preparation therefor, before the issuance of a certificate under subsection (b).

(d) DATA ON LENGTH OF REVIEW.—The Office shall make available to the public data describing the length of time between the institution of, and the issuance of a final written decision under subsection (a) for, each post-grant review.

§ 329. Appeal

A party dissatisfied with the final written decision of the Patent Trial and Appeal Board under section 328(a) may appeal the decision pursuant to sections 141 through 144. Any party to the post-grant review shall have the right to be a party to the appeal.

PART IV—PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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CHAPTER 36—INTERNATIONAL STAGE

§ 363. International application designating the United States: Effect

An international application designating the United States shall have the effect, from its international filing date under article 11 of the treaty, of a national application for patent regularly filed in the Patent and Trademark Office **[**except as otherwise provided in section 102(e) of this title**]**.

§ 365. Right of priority; benefit of the filing date of a prior application

(a) In accordance with the conditions and requirements of subsections (a) through (d) of section 119 **[**of this title**]**, a national application shall be entitled to the right of priority based on a prior filed international application which designated at least one country other than the United States.

(b) In accordance with the conditions and requirement of section 119(a) **[**of this title**]** and the treaty and the Regulations, an international application designating the United States shall be entitled to the right of priority based on a prior foreign application, or a prior international application designating at least one country other than the United States.

(c) In accordance with the conditions and requirements of section 120 **[**of this title**]**, an international application designating the United States shall be entitled to the benefit of the filing date of a prior national application or a prior international application designating the United States, and a national application shall be entitled to the benefit of the filing date of a prior international application designating the United States. If any claim for the benefit of an earlier filing date is based on a prior international application which designated but did not originate in the United States, the Director may require the filing in the Patent and Trademark Office of a certified copy of such application together with a translation thereof into the English language, if it was filed in another language.

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§ 368. Secrecy of certain inventions; filing international applications in foreign countries

(a) International applications filed in the Patent and Trademark Office shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 17 [of this title].

(b) In accordance with article 27(8) of the treaty, the filing of an international application in a country other than the United States on the invention made in this country shall be considered to constitute the filing of an application in a foreign country within the meaning of chapter 17 [of this title], whether or not the United States is designated in that international application.

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CHAPTER 37—NATIONAL STAGE

§ 371. National stage: Commencement

(a) * * *

(b) Subject to subsection (f) of this section, the national stage shall commence with the expiration of the applicable time limit under article 22(1) or (2), or under article 39(1)(a) [of the treaty] *of the treaty*.

(c) The applicant shall file in the Patent and Trademark Office—

(1) the national fee provided in section 41(a) [of this title];

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(4) an oath or declaration of the inventor (or other person authorized under chapter 11 [of this title]) complying with the requirements of section 115 [of this title] and with regulations prescribed for oaths or declarations of applicants;

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§ 372. National stage: Requirements and procedure

(a) * * *

(b) In case of international applications designating but not originating in, the United States—

(1) * * *

(2) the Director may cause the question of unity of invention to be reexamined under section 121 [of this title], within the scope of the requirements of the treaty and the Regulations; and

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§ 373. Improper applicant

An international application designating the United States, shall not be accepted by the Patent and Trademark Office for the national stage if it was filed by anyone not qualified under chapter 11 [of this title] to be an applicant for the purpose of filing a national application in the United States. Such international applications shall not serve as the basis for the benefit of an earlier filing date under section 120 [of this title] in a subsequently filed application, but may serve as the basis for a claim of the right of priority under subsections (a) through (d) of section 119 [of this title],

if the United States was not the sole country designated in such international application.

§ 374. Publication of international application

The publication under the treaty defined in section 351(a) [of this title], of an international application designating the United States shall be deemed a publication under section 122(b), except as provided in [sections 102(e) and 154(d) of this title] *section 154(d)*.

The publication under the treaty of an international application shall confer no rights and shall have no effect under this title other than that of a printed publication.

§ 375. Patent issued on international application: Effect

(a) A patent may be issued by the Director based on an international application designating the United States, in accordance with the provisions of this title. [Subject to section 102(e) of this title, such] *Such* patent shall have the force and effect of a patent issued on a national application filed under the provisions of chapter 11 [of this title].

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TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE

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PART IV—JURISDICTION AND VENUE

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CHAPTER 83—COURTS OF APPEALS

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§ 1295. Jurisdiction of the united states court of appeals for the federal circuit

(a) The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit shall have exclusive jurisdiction-

[(1) of an appeal from a final decision of a district court of the United States, the United States District Court for the District of the Canal Zone, the District Court of Guam, the District Court of the Virgin Islands, or the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, if the jurisdiction of that court was based, in whole or in part, on section 1338 of this title, except that a case involving a claim arising under any Act of Congress relating to copyrights, exclusive rights in mask works, or trademarks and no other claims under section 1338(a) shall be governed by sections 1291, 1292, and 1294 of this title;]

(1) of an appeal from a final decision of a district court of the United States, the District Court of Guam, the District Court of the Virgin Islands, or the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands, in any civil action arising under, or in any civil action in which a party has asserted a compulsory

counterclaim arising under, any Act of Congress relating to patents or plant variety protection;

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(4) of an appeal from a decision of-

[(A) the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences of the United States Patent and Trademark Office with respect to patent applications and interferences, at the instance of an applicant for a patent or any party to a patent interference, and any such appeal shall waive the right of such applicant or party to proceed under section 145 or 146 of title 35;]

(A) the Patent Trial and Appeal Board of the United States Patent and Trademark Office with respect to a patent application, derivation proceeding, reexamination, post-grant review, or inter partes review under title 35, at the instance of a party who exercised that party's right to participate in the applicable proceeding before or appeal to the Board, except that an applicant or a party to a derivation proceeding may also have remedy by civil action pursuant to section 145 or 146 of title 35; an appeal under this subparagraph of a decision of the Board with respect to an application or derivation proceeding shall waive the right of such applicant or party to proceed under section 145 or 146 of title 35;

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CHAPTER 85—COURTS OF APPEALS

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§ 1338. Patents, plant variety protection, copyrights, mask works, designs, trademarks, and unfair competition

(a) The district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action arising under any Act of Congress relating to patents, plant variety protection, copyrights and trademarks. [Such jurisdiction shall be exclusive of the courts of the states in patent, plant variety protection and copyright cases.] *No State court shall have jurisdiction over any claim for relief arising under any Act of Congress relating to patents, plant variety protection, or copyrights. For purposes of this subsection, the term "State" includes any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.*

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CHAPTER 89—DISTRICT COURTS; REMOVAL OF CASES FROM STATE COURTS

Sec.
1441. Actions removable generally.

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1454. Patent, plant variety protection, and copyright cases.

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§ 1454. Patent, plant variety protection, and copyright cases

(a) IN GENERAL.—A civil action in which any party asserts a claim for relief arising under any Act of Congress relating to patents, plant variety protection, or copyrights may be removed to the district court of the United States for the district and division embracing the place where the action is pending.

(b) SPECIAL RULES.—The removal of an action under this section shall be made in accordance with section 1446, except that if the removal is based solely on this section—

(1) the action may be removed by any party; and

(2) the time limitations contained in section 1446(b) may be extended at any time for cause shown.

(c) CLARIFICATION OF JURISDICTION IN CERTAIN CASES.—The court to which a civil action is removed under this section is not precluded from hearing and determining any claim in the civil action because the State court from which the civil action is removed did not have jurisdiction over that claim.

(d) REMAND.—If a civil action is removed solely under this section, the district court—

(1) shall remand all claims that are neither a basis for removal under subsection (a) nor within the original or supplemental jurisdiction of the district court under any Act of Congress; and

(2) may, under the circumstances specified in section 1367(c), remand any claims within the supplemental jurisdiction of the district court under section 1367.

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CHAPTER 99—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec.
1631. Transfer to cure want of jurisdiction.
1632. Transfer by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

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§ 1632. Transfer by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

When a case is appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit under section 1295(a)(1), and no claim for relief arising under any Act of Congress relating to patents or plant variety protection is the subject of the appeal by any party, the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit shall transfer the appeal to the court of appeals for the regional circuit embracing the district from which the appeal has been taken.

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TRADEMARK ACT OF 1946

TITLE I—THE PRINCIPAL REGISTER

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SEC. 21. (a) * * *

(b)(1) * * *

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(4) Where there is an adverse party, such suit may be instituted against the party in interest as shown by the records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office at the time of the decision complained of, but any party in interest may become a party to the action. If there are adverse parties residing in a plurality of districts not embraced within the same State, or an adverse party residing in a foreign country, the [United States District Court for the District of Columbia] *United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia* shall have jurisdiction and may issue summons against the adverse parties directed to the marshal of any district in which any adverse party resides. Summons against adverse parties residing in foreign countries may be served by publication or otherwise as the court directs.

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CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

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DIVISION B—DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

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TITLE VIII—PATENT AND TRADEMARK FEES

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SEC. 802. ADJUSTMENT OF TRADEMARK FEES.

(a) FEE FOR FILING APPLICATION.—[During fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007,] *Until such time as the Director sets or adjusts the fees otherwise,* under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Director, the fee under section 31(a) of the Trademark Act of 1946 (15 U.S.C. 1113(a)) for: (1) the filing of a paper application for the registration of a trademark shall be $375; (2) the filing of an electronic application shall be $325; and (3) the filing of an electronic application meeting certain additional requirements prescribed by the Director shall be $275. [During fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007, the] *The* provisions of the second and third sentences of section 31(a) of the Trademark Act of 1946 shall apply to the fees established under this section.

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SEC. 803. EFFECTIVE DATE, APPLICABILITY, AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISION.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as otherwise provided in this title (including this section), the provisions of this title shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [and shall apply only with respect to the remaining portion of fiscal year 2005 and fiscal year 2006].

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Dissenting Views

Patent reform is one of the most important issues facing Congress and the Nation. Increasingly our nation has an information based economy, and the key to such an economy is intellectual property such as patents, copyrights and trademarks. Studies establish that intellectual property drives this economy to the tune of $5 trillion dollars, accounting for half of all U.S. exports and employing nearly 18 million workers. This is why the House Judiciary Committee has been working on patent reform for over 6 years, under both parties.

Unfortunately, the legislation does not represent an overall improvement over the status quo and, as presently drafted is not one that I can support. Among other things, I object to provisions in the bill that apply retroactively with regard to business method patents [1] and false markings cases. [2] Most of the proposed reforms in both the House and Senate patent reform bills such as the other post-grant provisions are applicable going forward, not retroactively. If we are seeking to craft a bipartisan bill with consensus, stripping the legal rights of private parties involved in pending litigation is a non-starter.

Section 18 in the bill is purportedly designed to create an administrative mechanism to review so-called business method patents whose validity has been questioned. However, Section 18 is both too broad and too narrow to serve its purported goal, and works an injustice on legitimate patent holders as a result. Section 18 is overly broad because it is retroactive, applying to patents granted more than a decade ago. It is also overly broad because it could affect patents that have been upheld as valid through additional review at the USPTO, such as *ex parte* re-examination, or that have been held valid by a federal court. It applies not only to business methods but also to apparatus inventions. On the other hand, Section 18 is too narrow because instead of applying to all kinds of business methods, it only applies to financially-related business methods. Further, it is unfair and inappropriate to force specific patent holders that have been through reexamination, or that have survived years of legal challenge, to defend their patents under an entirely new set of rules at the USPTO. It is also contrary to patent law norms and establishes a bad precedent for our trade partners to force a small subset of patent holders—those who have invented financially-related business methods and associated apparatus—to defend themselves in a new, retroactive procedure that does not apply to any other patent holders.

[1] America Invents Act, H.R. 1249, 112th Cong. § 18.
[2] *Id.* § 15(b).

I am also opposed to the section dealing with false markings cases. I say this as a member who has expressed concerns in the past with the Federal Circuit decision in *Forest Group Inc. v. Bon Tool Co.* [3] The legislation, in essence, would change the rules of the game for cases that are currently being litigated. To the extent legislation is needed, I support applying the new rules going forward because these rules would be implemented and cases would be adjudicated in conjunction with the new broader reforms of the entire patent system the bill proposes, creating balance and fairness for all parties. Moreover, based on recent court decisions that have already imposed more restrictive standards concerning present claims, there is absolutely no reason for Congress to interfere in these claims which are before the courts. [4]

I am also concerned about the creation of a 3-year safe harbor for companies accused of false marking their products. Providing a safe harbor for expiring patents only compounds the retroactivity problem by ensuring that almost all ongoing litigation will be eliminated.

I would also like to express my support for the Additional Views being filed by other Democratic Members noting improvements that should be made in the bill regarding *inter partes* reexamination.

It is my hope that these and other problems can be alleviated and the bill modified so that it can become a true bipartisan consensus product.

JOHN CONYERS, JR.

Additional Views

Congressional efforts to enact comprehensive patent reform began in the 107th Congress. Since that time, various iterations of patent reform bills have fallen short of the elusive finish-line. Today, however, we are closer than we have ever been to crafting legislation that will strengthen the patent system and afford the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) the resources it requires to clear the still sizeable backlog of patent applications and move forward to deliver to all American inventors the first rate service they deserve. We are not there yet and the process has not been perfect. But Committee Democrats are encouraged that some of the core provisions we sought, for example, the expansion of prior user rights and the end to fee diversion, are in H.R. 1249. We write separately to highlight our concerns with modifications to the post-grant review procedures designed to provide controls on the quality of issued patents.

A longstanding goal of patent reform has been to improve the PTO's administrative procedures for challenging dubious patents through reexamination. H.R. 1249 creates a new post-grant review procedure to provide an additional check on poor-quality patents than currently available under current law. However, this new procedure is limited to challenges filed within 12 months of the date that a patent is granted. This 12-month deadline will limit the util-

[3] *Forest Group, Inc. v. Bon Tool Co.,* 590 F.3d 1295 (Fed. Cir. 2009).

[4] *Unique Product Solutions, Ltd. v. Hy-Grade Valve, Inc.,* No. 10-1912, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS (N.D. Ohio Feb. 23, 2011); *In re BP Lubricants USA Inc.,* Misc. Docket No. 960, 2011 U.S. App. LEXIS 5015 (Fed. Cir. March 15, 2011).